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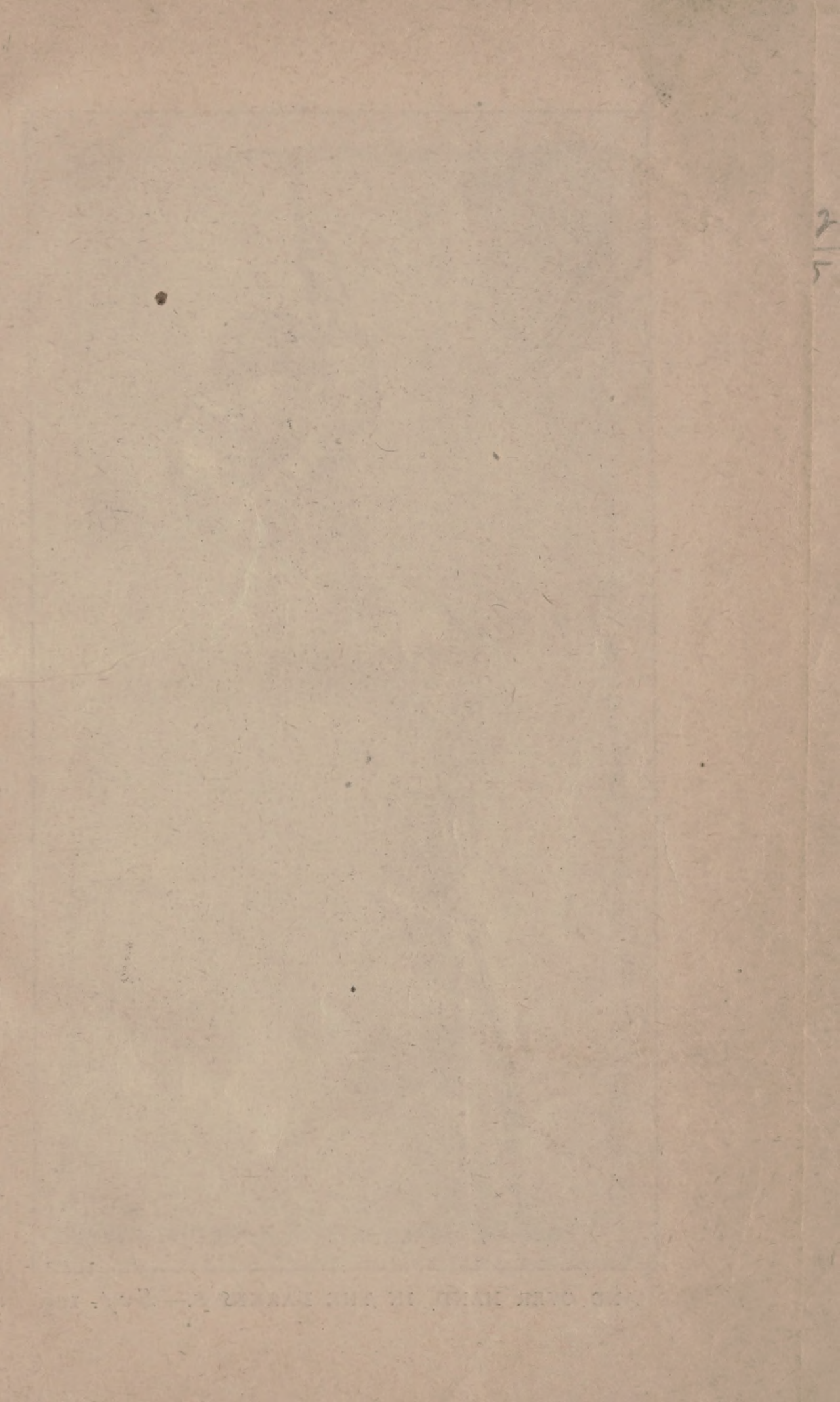
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HAND OVER HAND, IN THE DARKNESS.—*Sec p.* 109.

STORIES
OF
DANGER AND ADVENTURE

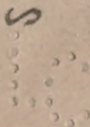
BY

FREDERICK SCHWATKA, ROSE G. KINGSLEY,
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Illustrated



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THE BREAKING-UP OF THE ICE BRIDGE.

AMONG the inhabitants of one of the little fishing villages on the south shore of the St. Lawrence river, was a thrifty French Canadian named Pierre Laval. His family consisted of his rosy-cheeked, good-natured wife, Louise the eldest child, from her womanly ways nicknamed "the little mother," Jean, a strong lad of thirteen, and the baby, whose bright black eyes and white skin made one think of two huckleberries in a bowl of milk.

In summer there was no more attractive spot in N. than the cosy Laval cottage, with its porch wreathed with honeysuckle, and its little plot of ground gay with beds and borders of bright-tinted flowers; and in winter the pantry was always well filled, and the wood-shed piled to the very rafters

with great logs; for Pierre was a good provider, and by working hard at fishing during the summer months and at lumbering in winter, he managed to earn considerable money, and instead of spending it at the village inn, he carried it home for the use of his wife and little ones.

On the afternoon of a certain cloudy day, the door of the Laval cottage opened every few moments, and Louise peered anxiously down the road. At last she spied the stout figure of Jean coming up the street, and drawing her little red shawl tightly over her head, she ran to meet him.

“Hurrah, Lou!” he cried gayly; “the boat is almost done, and the boys are going to let me have the naming of it. I think I shall call it ‘The Louise.’”

But the girl did not seem to hear. “Oh, hurry, Jean!” she gasped, pressing her hands together nervously; “the baby!”

Then Jean, for the first time, noticed how pale and anxious his sister’s face was.

“Well, what of the baby?” he asked.

“Sick, oh, so sick! he never was like this before.”



"HOLD FAST TO ME, LOUISE." HE SAID,

“And you wanted me to go on some errand. I am sorry now that I staid all night, but mother said I might if the boys wanted me.”

“Your staying was all right, Jean, only everything has gone wrong this time. Word came this morning that a gang of men was wanted at the big lumber-yard, and father and the neighbors went away early and will not be back before the end of the week.”

“But where’s Mother Barbet? Can’t she cure the baby?”

Louise shook her head sadly. “For once, Jean, her medicine don’t seem to do any good; but she says she has been with the great doctor over the river two or three times when he has had throats even worse than the baby’s, and that he uses a new kind of medicine — a little white powder — and it always helps people right off. He gave her the name of the powder, but I couldn’t find it at the little shop in the village, and mother didn’t dare trust me to go across the river with Jet. He hasn’t been out of the stable for four or five days, and he is as wild as a wolf.”

N. was too small a town to be able to afford the luxury of a physician all for itself; besides, the

people took so much exercise in the open air, and ate such simple food, and kept such early hours and were so strong and healthy, that a doctor would have found but little to do. In cases of severe sickness the people of N. always sent for the learned physician across the river; but on all ordinary occasions they depended entirely on "old Mother Barbet," the fame of whose skilful nursing and simple remedies had spread far and wide.

It was toward the close of the long and bitter Canadian winter. Already, in some localities, little shallow pools of water standing here and there on the frozen surface of the St. Lawrence river showed that the sun was getting back some of its summer heat and power; and the inhabitants along the shores prophesied the speedy breaking-up of the ice, the clearing of the river, and the re-appearance of the long procession of stately ships sailing by on their way to Montreal. But as yet not a crack had disfigured the glittering mass of ice which for two months had stretched out as level as a floor, making a firm, safe bridge between the little village on the south shore and the large town of V. If the peo-

ple of the little village wanted anything from the large town, all they had to do was to harness their horses, and "whiz" across the ice and back again in a few moments. It was a thousand times better than the slow, unreliable summer ferry; and too, during the clear, calm moonlight nights, you could hear the tinkling of the bells and the sounds of gay laughter as one sleigh-load after another of young people sped over the ice, bent on some merry-making or frolic.

As Jean and Louise entered the cottage, their mother met them with a sober face. How still and lonesome it seemed without the bright baby, who always laughed and put out his little hands the moment the big brother came in sight! Jean felt conscience-smitten when he remembered how often he had said, "Bother take the baby!" when his mother had left the little fellow in his charge for a few moments. In fact, it was but two or three days since he had been wicked enough to wish the baby dead, when he had been called in from play to rock the cradle. And hadn't the good priest told the boys of the parish school only that very week, "that a

murderous thought was almost as bad in the eyes of God as a murderous blow." If the baby should die — the boy's heart gave a great thump as he thought of it — how could he, Jean Laval, ever look any one in the face again!

"Take courage, mother," he said bravely. "I'll harness Jet, and have him at the door in a moment."

Mrs. Laval wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron and looked anxiously out of the window. "Are you sure it is safe to cross, my son? I don't like the looks of that sky, and the weather has been warmer lately, and there have been signs of the breaking-up of the ice above us."

"But that was far up the river; and as for the clouds, they do look pretty squally, that's a fact; but we shall be back long before the storm breaks."

"Louise knows what to tell the doctor. If he shouldn't be home, leave word for him to come as soon as possible, and then hurry to the drug-store and get the powder, and be sure and buy a double portion for Mother Barbet. She is coming to stay with me while you are away. Yes, I suppose it is best to go."

In a few moments Jean and Louise were snugly tucked inside the little sledge under the warm wolf-skins, and the black pony with his head down, going at his best pace, brought them in a short time to the river's edge. The ice was soon crossed, and after a short drive up the main street of the large town Jean pulled up in front of the doctor's office. Finding him out, he scrawled a message on the slate, and stopping at the drug-store he bought two bottles of the white powder, which he carefully placed in his inside coat-pocket; and then they started for home.

"How dark it has grown!" exclaimed Louise as they reached the crossing-place and saw a crowd of men standing looking out on the frozen river and gesticulating earnestly; "and that sky, Jean! it frightens me to look at it." She pointed to a writhing mass of huge inky clouds rapidly climbing up from the horizon. The wind, which had been blowing steadily all day, had entirely died away, leaving a stillness which was almost oppressive. This ominous silence was broken only by an occasional moaning which seemed to vibrate along the frozen surface of the river.

As the black pony stepped out upon the ice, some men motioned Jean back ; and finding him determined to go on, two or three of them sprang forward and seized the bridle. "You're young, my master, but you're old enough to know better than to venture across in the face of such a sky as that. And haven't you heard the news from up the river? the ice has already weakened in spots!"

"Let go!" said Jean, tightening his hold on the reins. "Weak ice or not, I *must* cross."

But several other men had gathered in front of the pony. "Back, back, I say!" shouted one. "We have had orders to stop people from crossing; but in truth, I didn't think there would be man or boy fool enough to attempt it. Don't you know the meaning of those clouds? The tornado may be on us at any time — even now while we are talking."

"But I tell you I must cross, and you have no right to keep me here losing time," returned Jean, flushing angrily, while Louise turned her face imploringly toward the men.

"We must try to cross," she said with trembling lips. "My little brother is sick — perhaps dying ;

we have been for the doctor and are taking back the medicine. Father is away, and mother is waiting for us."

The men looked irresolute. "Better to lose *one* child than *three*," said the first speaker, still keeping hold of the bridle.

"Let the youngsters go, neighbor Tyrrel," exclaimed a new-comer. "It is Pierre Laval's pony, the best traveller about N. Perhaps he can get them across before the storm bursts. Think of your own wife left alone with a dying baby, and waiting for medicine. Spare not the whip my boy, and may the good God put such speed in your pony's legs as never was there before !"

Jet, glad to be released, darted forward on his way. The same oppressive stillness continued, still the black clouds mounted higher and higher, and there was the same peculiar moaning in the ice beneath. The children had already crossed more than two-thirds of the distance, when there came a little puff of wind, followed by two or three violent gusts which caused the light sledge to swerve to one side. The next moment, there was a heavy boom in the ice

directly underneath them, and the air was filled with a succession of sharp reports like the rattling of musketry.

Louise, too frightened to speak, turned and looked in her brother's face, but she found little there to re-assure her. His eyes were riveted on a large crack in the ice before them through which could be seen the dark waters of the swiftly moving current. Obeying the sudden sting of the whip, the pony gathered himself for a spring and cleared the crack just as it widened to an impassable chasm behind them. A second crack was crossed in the same manner, and then Jean saw that their floating platform was surrounded on all sides by water. "We must leave the sleigh, Louise," he said. "It will be safer lying flat on the ice." He took his knife and cut the pony loose from the sledge. "It is only fair to give poor Jet a chance for his life," he muttered; and then seizing his sister by the hand, he dragged her to the strongest part of the floe just as it parted in the middle with a sudden snap.

The little red sledge slipped into the water, and the pony, neighing piteously, drifted rapidly from

their sight. Jean heard the shouting of voices, and through the driving rain he was able to make out the figures of men on shore running to and fro. "Hold fast to me, Louise," he said, as she gave a little gasp when the floe tilted to one side and the icy waves dashed over their faces; "we are nearing the stationary ice by the shore. If you can but hold out for a moment longer!"

The next instant the huge blocks of ice, as they came crashing down the river, forced the little floe on the firm ice, and strong arms carried the children to a place of safety.

The doctor was not able to cross the river for some time; but the white powder saved the baby's life, and the little fellow was crowing and laughing as usual several days before Jean and Louise recovered from the effects of the cold and the fright.

The morning after the rescue of the two children, the black pony, with his shaggy mane and tail fringed with icicles, was found alive and well on a little cape where he had safely drifted ashore.

A KING'S BED.



W A Y
over in
Germa-
ny, in

the curious old city of N ———, lives a little girl named

Barbara. Barbara is six years old and has flaxen braids, a round rosy face, and goes to school with a little linen knapsack slung over her shoulder, as other German children do. But I am going to tell you of something which happened to Barbara which perhaps never happened to any little German child before.

It was a Saturday afternoon in spring when the apple-trees were covered with pink and white blossoms, and the robins were flying through the sunny air with a great deal to tell each other of good situations for nest-building. Barbara's mother said to her that Saturday afternoon: "Thou canst go, little daughter, to thy aunt Marie in Castle street; thou hast been a good girl and taken care of Gretel all the morning. Brush thy hair, and make thy hands clean. . . . So — that is my tidy Barbara. Tell auntie I send her my hearty greeting, and will come with the father to-morrow. Give me a kiss — there, run along, and be a good girl."

So Barbara took her dear, battered doll, Minni, from the corner, and in her best blue dress, with a little white cap tied over her flaxen braids, trotted off through the narrow, crooked streets.

Castle street is so called because it leads up to the old, gray, thick-walled castle which belongs to the king of that country, although he does not live in it now, having so many other palaces newer and handsomer. At the head of the steep street stands the great arched gateway leading into the castle courtyard, and little Barbara fully believed that gate was the entrance into fairy-land. It was her dearest wish to go inside that charmed gateway, and her aunt had promised to take her; but the day had never come.

Barbara found that aunt Marie was gone to market; so she went out to play on the sidewalk, taking Minni with her. As usual she strayed up to the castle gate, and stood gazing with wonder and admiration at the lions carved in stone on either side. Presently a gentleman with two ladies came up to the gate. The gentleman held a book with red covers open in his hand and read something aloud from it to which the ladies listened, and then they all looked attentively at the gate. Barbara could not understand a word that the gentleman said, for he spoke English; but she saw that these people were going into her fairy-land, and without waiting to think what her mother

would say, she followed them into the court-yard.

An old woman, whose husband was steward of the castle, soon came to show the party around, and our little Barbara trotted demurely after, holding fast to her beloved Minni. After walking through long passages and mounting a wide stone staircase, the old woman led them into a suite of very grand rooms, with richly carved ceilings, highly polished floors and faded but handsome furniture. One of these was a bedroom; and Barbara stared with great round eyes at the magnificent canopy and curtains, with a gilded crown at the top, and the crimson velvet coverlet heavy with gold embroidery.

No one seemed to notice the little waif, and she became quite at ease and wandered around with a wise little look on her face as if she were quite in the habit of visiting royal palaces. On the bedroom wall hung a portrait of the old king, Frederick Barbarossa, in shining armor, with a tremendous sword in his hand. Barbara stopped to look at it, but the stern eyes seemed to stare straight at her, and she turned away, half-frightened, clasping Minni closer. She found that the others had now gone out on to a bal-

cony from which there was a wide view, and she hastened after them.

These people seemed to be delighted with the outlook over hills and valleys and villages, but little Barbara soon found something far more to her taste. It was the castle moat. In the old, old times when men built a castle they made a very wide ditch around it, as wide as a broad street sometimes, and the sides of it were like a stone wall. This was filled with water, and the only way for friend or foe to cross it was by a drawbridge — a bridge which could be drawn back whenever the lord of the castle pleased. So when enemies came, trying to enter the castle, the drawbridge would be lifted, and they could not cross the moat. There is such a moat around this old castle of N——; but as there was no longer any need of using it to keep away the enemies of the king, the water was long ago drained off, and the moat turned into a garden.

Barbara, at one end of the long balcony, looked between the rails down into the moat just below; it was full of blossoming apple-trees, and the flower-beds were gay with tulips and hyacinths. In one of the paths a dog and a cat were having a grand frolic, and



LITTLE BARBARA ENTERS FAIRY-LAND AT LAST.

this scene interested Barbara more than the fine prospect.

It was so funny to see the kitten, which from that distance looked such a mite of a thing, box the ears of the great dog, then whisk madly around after her tail half a dozen times ; make a wild dash with her paws at the petals falling from the apple blossoms, and then spring back to her playfellow. These capers and many others were repeated over and over to Barbara's great delight, and she had entirely forgotten where she was, when, at last, the dog, tired of nonsense, rose, walked gravely off and disappeared ; and the kitten, after scrambling wildly up the stem of a tree, soon followed. Barbara watched a moment to see if they would not return ; but they did not, so she went back through the window into the room she had left. She was a little frightened to find no one in it, and she hurried on through room after room to the great door which opened upon the corridor.

But when she had clasped the huge brass knob in her two little hands, and turned it around, and pulled with all her might, the heavy door was not stirred, for it was locked.

Then Barbara knew that all the people had forgotten her, and that she was locked up in those great gloomy rooms for the night, unless she could make somebody hear her.

She pounded with her tiny fists upon the door, and called "*Komm ! Komm !*" at the top of her voice ; but the sound was lost, and could not pierce the thick walls and door.

The hot tears chased each other down her cheeks, as she looked down at her little self, and then around the cold, stately room. She felt so utterly forsaken, so frightened by all the strangeness and loneliness, that I think the poor little thing might have lost her senses if she had not at that moment caught sight of Minni lying on the floor, lonely like herself.

She snatched her dolly up and hugged the dear, stiff thing to her breast ; and a feeling of having to take care of Minni that came up in her motherly, loving little heart, made her less lonely and afraid. She walked back over the slippery, polished floors, passing the great picture of Barbarossa with only one frightened glance, and went out again upon the balcony. The cat and the dog had come back again,

and some children were playing with them now. Barbara called and called to them as loud as she could call, hoping they would look up and see her ; but the little childish voice did not reach them, and they never looked up in that direction.

So she gave up calling, and sitting down on the floor of the balcony, watched the children through the railing, and played and talked with Minni in a happy little fashion of her own, until the sun set and the air began to grow chilly. The children were called into a small house by their mother to their evening meal, and poor little Barbara began to be very hungry and to wonder what they were doing at home.

At first she hoped they would try and find her ; but she soon reflected that her auntie so often kept her over night that her mother would not be anxious at her absence, and old Lieschen at aunt Marie's would probably think she had gone home again.

She was cold now, so she went back into the royal bed-chamber, and stood looking out of the window, watching the lights come out all over the city, and thinking now this one, now that one, was perhaps shining out of their own warm, cosey sitting room.

In a chimney that stood up very dark against the pale evening sky there was a stork's nest, and Barbara could see an old stork standing beside it, his head on one side and one foot lifted. She told Minni about it, and tried to make the doll see it; and all the time she was choking down her tears.

Soon her eyes grew very heavy, and she knew that it must be bed-time. She went and stood at the foot of the grand royal bed, and looked timidly at its heavy curtains. Did she dare to go to sleep there? No; but where else could she sleep? It was cold, and if she should lie on one of those damask sofas there would be nothing with which to cover herself. Barbara did not wait long to decide; she sat down on the floor, untied her shoes and pulled them and her red stockings off, and then pattered with her little bare feet up to the head of the great bed, knelt down with folded hands and said "Our Father," and then crept under the velvet, gold-embroidered coverlet, and laid her flaxen braids and tear-stained cheek upon the pillow which had been pressed only by royal heads before—but Barbara did not think about that.

She hugged Minni very close, but she wished that

instead of her hard cheek she might feel the soft, warm face of her little sister Gretel. Soon, however, all her troubles were forgotten and she fell fast asleep.

After many hours, which seemed to Barbara only a few minutes, she thought the great king in the picture which hung opposite the bed, stepped down out of the frame, and began walking around the room, clanking his armor with a fearful noise. At first she thought she should not be frightened much if he only did not fasten those dreadful eyes upon her, and he did not; but suddenly they seemed to rest upon something near her, and to her terror she saw that he was looking at Minni! he drew his sword rattling from his sheath and began to talk in a loud voice.

“Ha!” he said. “Is it so small men have become? Thou art too small to sleep in a king’s bed. Away! Quickly!” And he struck his long sword straight into poor Minni’s heart, and then waved her to and fro, like a mosquito on the point of a needle.

“Oh, don’t!” cried Barbara, very earnestly, springing towards him. “Please, *please* don’t! All the sawdust will come out!” But her voice seemed muffled. The gruff old soldier would not look at her or

listen to her; and sure enough, the sawdust came pouring out, and seemed to cover the whole floor.

“Now get out!” cried the king, “and wait till thou art bigger before thou comest here again!” and he walked with long strides to the window to throw poor Minni out.

Then Barbara burst off the chain of sleep, screamed aloud, and awoke to find herself kneeling on the cold floor which was flooded with moonlight. She looked up at the picture of the old king. It was there, just as she had seen it before dark. Minni was lying very straight and very wide awake in the bed. Barbara went back, chilled and trembling, and cried herself to sleep again.

Morning came, and the old stewardess with her bunch of rattling keys at her waist, and her feather-duster in hand, opened the great door, against which Barbara's poor little fists had pounded so helplessly the afternoon before, and came in to dust the state apartments. What surprise could have been greater than hers when, on entering the bed-chamber she saw a little girl with a sweet, rosy face, her flaxen hair flying all over the pillow, and a battered doll hugged

tight in her arms, fast asleep in the royal bed ! The good woman clasped her hands, and for a moment could not speak for astonishment.

“Oh jemini ! Oh je ! Oh my goodness ! Oh thou dear Heaven ! Thou blessed babe ! Where did she come from ? ” she exclaimed at last.

And then she remembered the little flaxen-haired girl in the blue dress, whom she had until that moment forgotten, who had come in yesterday with the American visitors, and then she understood it all.

“The poor little one,” she thought ; “a wonder that she did not die of fear ! ” Here the good old soul began kissing Barbara, who woke up ready to cry with bewilderment. But she was soon comforted when the stewardess took her down to her own room, washed her face and dressed her, and, best of all, gave her a good breakfast. When all this was over with, Barbara wanted to go home, and hardly waiting to say good-by, she snatched up Minni, and ran as fast as her little feet could carry her, never stopping at aunt Marie's, until she came to her own door.

“So,” said the mother when Barbara came in,

"aunt Marie kept thee all night, dear heart. Hast thou been mother's good girl?"

"I did not stay at aunt Marie's," quoth Barbara. "I stayed all night in the castle of the king, and slept in his bed."

"The child has been dreaming," thought the mother, and could not believe it.

But Barbara knows.

AHMOW'S FIGHT WITH THE WOLVES.

LITTLE AHMOW was an Eskimo boy about ten years old, who lived with his parents on the bleak shores of northern Hudson's Bay.

The Eskimo call themselves *Innuits* in their own language, and the particular tribe to which Ahmow belonged were Iwillik Innuits, so called from *i-wick*, the Eskimo for walrus, because they lived almost altogether upon walrus. During eight or nine months of the year, when the ice is along their shores, they hunt and kill the walrus on the outer edge of the ice-floe which is the great wide strip of ice frozen fast to the shores and held by the islands and reefs here and there — or on the ice-pack, which is the floating cakes of ice that have broken off from the floe during storms. During the short Arctic summer of two or three months, when the

ice is all gone, they hunt them on the islands that lie thickly off the mainland and in the waters near them ; for the walrus is a huge animal that loves the water and lives in it nearly altogether, leaving it only to bask in the sun on a small island or near the edge of a cake of ice.

When a walrus is secured by the Eskimo, its meat is sewed up in its own hide, to prevent the dogs from eating it up ; and it is a good protection, for to bite through the thick skin is like trying to bite through a piece of rubber belting. The walrus oil saved — about a barrellful for each animal — was formerly sewed up in sealskin bags and covered with large stones to protect it from the dogs, wolves, and foxes ; but as whalemens have come among them, and ships have been wrecked on their ice-bound coasts, they have saved the large casks, holding four and five barrels, and now fill these with oil. Although this oil is got in the summer, as I have said, it is only needed in the winter when they are living in houses of snow and burn the oil in their lamps to warm them. So the casks generally remain on the islands until the ice forms to them,

and over this they ride merrily on their sledges to get it from time to time.

It was one winter when little Ahmow's father hitched up his sledge-team of six or eight fine dogs at the village where they were living, intending to go to an island some ten or twelve miles distant and get a cask or two of oil for the lamp, and some of the walrus meat and some hide to feed to the dogs.

Ahmow's father, *Nannook* by name — which means the polar bear, for the Eskimo are named like our Western Indians, after animals, birds, or incidents of their lives — had intended at first to go alone ; but his little boy begged so hard to go — and they humor their boys so in all their wishes — that his father promised him that he might. So Ahmow wrapped himself up in his new reindeer suit that his mother had just completed for him from the reindeer skins his father had secured in the fall, for it was a very cold day out-of-doors, although the Eskimo seldom notice the cold, however intense it may be, unless the wind is blowing sharp from the direction in which they want to travel.

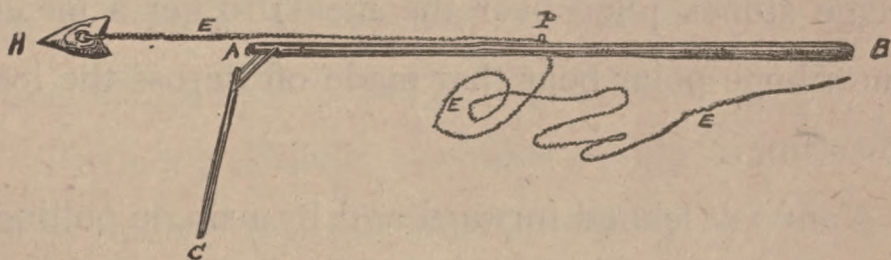
He helped his father, as all Eskimo children are

very fond of doing, with such aid as he could in preparing for the journey. He brought water in a sealskin bucket, and with his father put a thick coating of ice on the bottom of his sledge runners so that they would glide over the snow smoothly. He helped catch the dogs and harness them and tie them to the sledge; and when this was done ran into the snow-house — or rather crawled in on his hands and knees, so low is the door — and got his father's whip and their lunch to eat while they were gone. Then both of them jumping on the sledge, the long whiplash was cracked over the backs of the dogs and away they went on as merry a ride as any young fellow would wish to take, whether Eskimo or civilized boy.

On they went at this fast gait for two or three miles. Then the dogs were allowed to drop down to a pleasant trot, a gait they will keep up all day with a light sledge when a number are harnessed to it.

Once or twice the dogs threw their noses in the air and sniffed the breeze. Then Nannook would take one dog, the best hunter, out of the sledge,

and the dog's nose would lead him to a seal-hole in the ice. Here the two would wait a few minutes, and if the seal did not come to "blow" (which means to get its breath, the first gasp or two being quite loud), they would resume their sledge journey. One seal came up to breathe while they were watching it, and Ahmow's father caught it with his seal spear, just to instruct his little boy in the way



ESKIMO WALRUS SPEAR.

a b — wooden handle.

a c — walrus ivory lance.

e — sealskin line extending to

h — barbed head.

When ready for use the ivory lance is "bent on" to the wooden handle, and the head placed on the end *c*; all held in a straight line by the line *e* passed over the pin *p*. When the head is driven under the skin of an animal, a twist is given the spear which breaks off at *c* and *a*, the wood and ivory falling away and nothing but the line is left in the hands of the hunter.

of hunting and catching them. The hole in the snow where the seal breathes is not much larger

than a dime or quarter of a dollar ; so you can see that the dog's keen nose is needed to find so small an affair among vast fields of ice.

The seal was thrown on the sledge, and they were off again for the island with its oil-casks. When they were very near to it, what should they see spring up from its side, where he had evidently been prowling around the oil-casks and meat-cairns (huge stones piled over the meat) to get a meal, but a huge polar bear that made off across the ice to escape.

Nannook leaned forward and, by a single pulling on a strap, let loose the whole team of dogs. They soon brought the polar bear to bay, sitting up on his haunches fighting them, and here they remained till Nannook came up with his gun, and with a single effectual shot killed the great animal. He was soon skinned, the meat from his carcass put in a stone cairn for dog-food in the future.

Then Ahmow's father commenced loading his sledge. A small cask of oil was put on, and another larger one about a third filled with walrus meat for the dogs ; the seal and bearskin put in

the latter. Then father and son started home, the former walking alongside ; for the load was heavy and the dogs now had to go at a walk. They were nearly half-way back home when Nannook saw some reindeer on a low ridge of the land near which they were traveling. He asked Ahmow to watch the dogs while he would take the gun and try hard to get one or two, for there is no meat in the Arctic that the Eskimo prizes so highly as the reindeer.

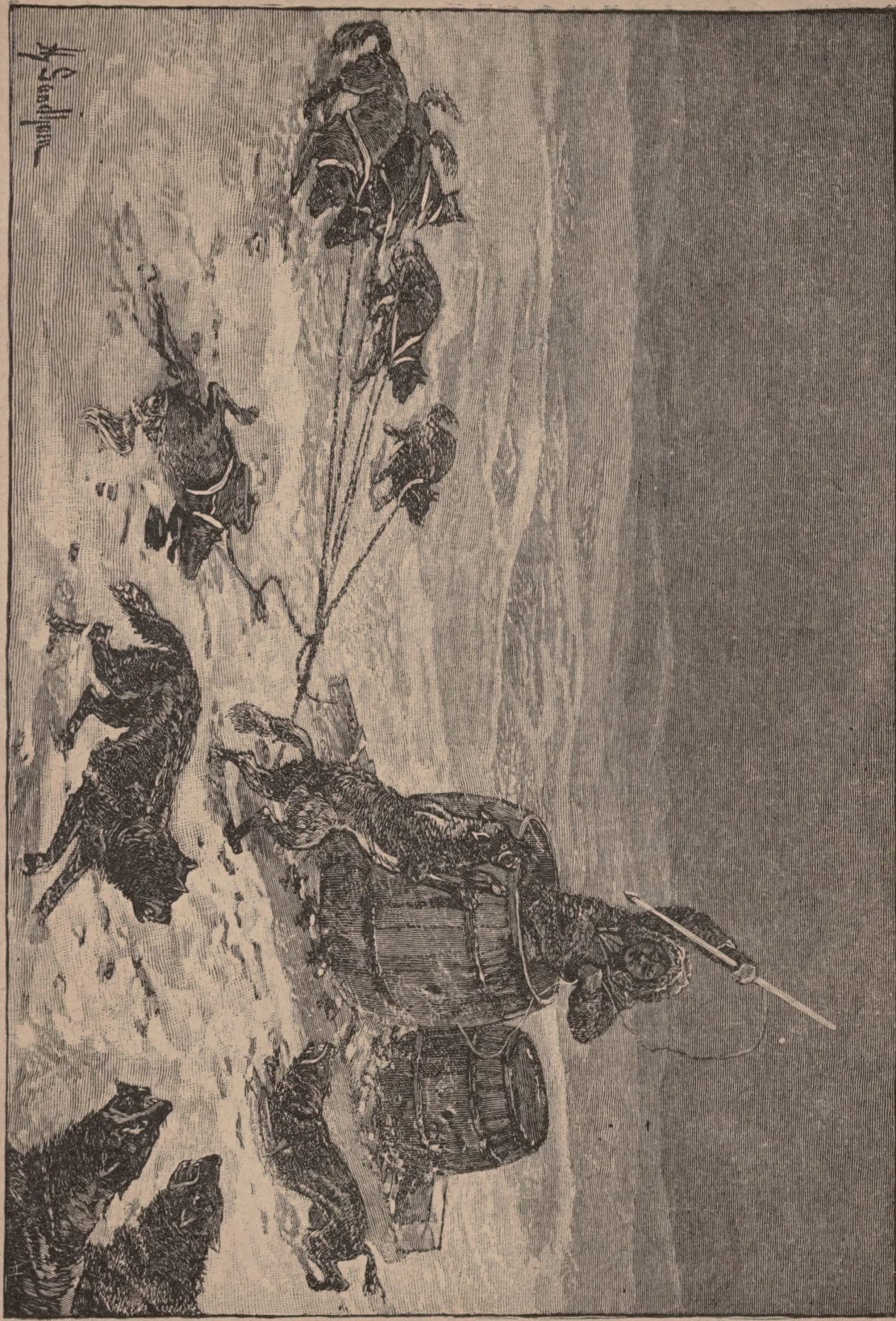
Presently Ahmow saw him disappear over the hills and he was left alone, amusing himself now and then by whacking a dog over the nose with the whip that tried to steal something from the sledge. By and by he sat down, thinking it was full time to hear a shot from his father's gun. All the dogs had curled up on the snow and gone to sleep, and he was listlessly punching the snow with the tip of a long walrus spear that his father was bringing back home from the island. In fact he was almost half asleep when he heard an angry growl near him that he took to be caused by a dog trying to steal from the sledge, another interrupting him. Casting his head around, he saw what he yet thought

was an unharnessed dog ; but a second glance showed him plainly it was a huge wolf, grinning savagely at him, not over twenty feet away. Ahmow manfully brought his spear-point to the front and felt that he was equal to his enemy when, to his horror, he saw that there were three or four others trotting up into sight. He shouted at them and brandished his spear and this awakened the dogs. To them the pack of wolves turned their attention ; for, singular as it may seem, there is nothing that they apparently like so well as dog-flesh, attacking them in preference to anything around.

Ahmow now thought he would attack the wolves while they were battling with his dogs. But he knew how ferocious and large they were ; one alone could easily kill him if it got any advantage over him. So he jumped into the open cask about a third full of the walrus meat, the seal and bear-skin. Then keeping his trusty spear handy he picked up the whip and applied it so lustily to the wolves with all his strength that they turned from the dogs, after killing one and maiming others, and paid their attention to him, and I suppose the poor little

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By Sandham



Brave Little Ahmow.

Eskimo thought that his hour had come. They piled up around the cask in a most ferocious manner, snapping and growling. One put his paws on the top of the cask. Ahmow knocked him off with the spear, and the others withdrew a little. They soon came back to the charge and the most ferocious jumped on the smaller cask. Ahmow knocked this one down with the spear, wounding him.

As the wolves withdrew a little the second time, Ahmow reached down in the cask, and, although it would seem to require the strength of a man, he lifted the hundred-pound seal and threw it out of the cask, when the voracious beasts pounced upon it and commenced tearing it to pieces, truly "hungry as wolves." Just then the boy saw his father coming not over a hundred yards away as he surmounted a high hummock of ice, looking for his sledge, his reindeer chase having been unsuccessful. And now Ahmow, knowing there would be short work with the wolves as soon as he did arrive, could not resist a hunter's temptation; with uplifted walrus spear, and throwing all the remainder of his strength into the thrust, he cast the spear into

the shoulder of one of the wrangling wolves. The walrus spear is so made that with a slight twist the handle is disengaged when an animal is struck, and the hunter has only the long seal-line with the barb under the skin just as an angler has a fish. And so it was with Ahmow and the wolf. The spear handle fell to the ground, and Ahmow had the wolf by the line, and on to this he held with all his might, while the others scampered away frightened by this strange proceeding. He got the line turned around a projecting stave and this helped him to hold the plunging, howling animal; and when Nannook came up he was greeted with one of the most singular sights he ever beheld in his life — his little boy with a speared wolf at the end of his walrus line trying ineffectually to get away, while Ahmow was grinning from one ear to the other over his success. The dead and mangled dogs told him the story well enough, however; but when it was explained in full to him, and to the people of the village, the boy was voted a hero, and always after was *Ah-mow*, which in the Eskimo language means “the Wolf.”

STONED BY A MOUNTAIN.

I WAS once stoned by a mountain; and a very disagreeable experience it was.

About six years ago my cousin Carrie V. and I were staying at Mürren in Switzerland, a little village of red-brown chalets, perched on the top of the lofty cliffs which form one wall of the Lauterbrunnen Valley. A sheer three thousand feet below us lay the green valley with its walnut and cherry trees; its stone-weighted house roofs and shady little pastures; its booths where rapacious peasants sold silver chains, and alpenstocks, and carved cows and clocks and paper-knives, and views of snow-mountains painted on wooden boxes; its wondrous waterfalls, and its "Alpen-horn," whose notes float up through the spray of the Staubach Fall, and bound from rock to rock, from cliff to cliff, and you grow sentimental and think of

“the horns of elfland faintly blowing,” until you come nearer and see a hideous Swiss man blowing with distended crimson cheeks into the end of an enormous green wooden horn, which emits unearthly hootings that only distance can change into sweet notes.

We had climbed the steep path through the damp pine woods for two hours, and now we were living up among the clouds; and if we dared venture so near the dangerous cliff-edge, we could see all the valley down below us. But our eyes turned oftener to the opposite side of the Lauterbrunnen Valley.

There, right before us, rose a range of snowy giants, thousands of feet high — Ischingelhorn, Breithorn, Grosshorn, Silberhorn, Giger, Mönch — guarding the maiden mountain, the queen of this glorious court, the white, ethereal Jungfrau herself. For seven weeks we lived in sight of this spotless presence; in storm and sunshine, in fog or in clear moonlight, we knew she was there. And we grew to love her, with a love full of awe; and to watch her varying moods by day and night, to watch the

first rose-flush of dawn on her lofty summit, the cloud shadows flitting blue across her broad expanse of snow, the avalanche pouring like a white cataract from her sides, the sunset and the mysterious afterglow dyeing her pure snow crimson — and then, when night had fallen and the stars came out, we watched her proud head emerge from the gloom and shine against the purple black of the heavens, clear and vast and awful.

On this summer's day Carrie and I turned our backs on the Jungfrau, and set our faces towards the mountains that lie behind Mürren. We were both botany-mad. This was my first visit to Switzerland ; and the flowers in the pastures, the flowers in the woods, the flowers by the streams, the flowers even on the bare rocks, had gone to my head. I dreamt of flowers by night. I gathered flowers, and dug up flower-roots by day. We filled every glass and jug and basin in our little rooms with flowers — and had to turn them out every morning when we wanted to wash ! We begged vases from waiter and chambermaid. And at last we went into the châteaux and bought the peasants red earth-

enware milkpans, all to be filled with flowers.

It was just the last week in June. The hay in the mountain pastures was not yet cut. It was not common hay such as one sees in English meadows, with here and there an oxeyed daisy, or a bunch of red sorrel among the close, fine grasses. Here there was no grass to be seen; but the meadows were masses knee-deep of bright flowers — blue campanulas, pink polygonums, white ranunculus, purple geraniums, yellow hawkweeds, and a hundred other beauties — a waving sea of brilliant color as the Alpine wind swept over its surface.

No one who has only seen Switzerland in July and August can tell what he has lost by his late visit. The lovely flower fields have then turned to bare, parched, slippery Alps, from which even the cattle have fled in search of more succulent pasturage. The roadsides, where in June every shrub is loaded with fragrant blossoms and the turf gay with tiny flowerets, are then white with thick heavy dust from the ceaseless traffic; and the few flowers that dare to brave the dusty glare are as “tired” as Mr. Oscar Wilde’s primroses in London.

We had explored the hayfields and the woods close round Mürren during the first few days of our visit ; and rumors reached us of yet richer hunting grounds — of a valley of flowers, the Blumenthal — lying about half an hour's walk northwest of the Hotel des Alpes.

Now, among all the hundreds of exquisite Alpine flowers, there was one that I longed to find beyond every other. The *Primula Auricula*, with its golden blossoms and mealy leaves, the parent of all the quaint and richly varied auriculas of the garden hovered before my mind's eye, a tantalizing vision of beauty and sweetness. It only grows at a considerable height above the sea, and flowers very early in the season. But I vowed that if it was to be found I would find it. So we set out for the Blumenthal.

Our way lay through the picturesque châlets of Mürren. All the women were sitting at their doors making coarse lace on pillows ; and we stopped for a minute to speak to lovely Elizabeth, the belle of the village, who had just returned from a ten-mile walk to carry her young husband his dinner in the

forest where he was felling trees. Ah ! these mountaineers know what hard work is. Our beautiful friend, Elizabeth, with a sweet wistful face like a Madonna in a holy picture, was barely nineteen ; and yet she was out every morning before four to turn the cow and goats out. Then she joined the women of the village and picked stones off one of the mountain pastures for some hours, and after that set out to walk six or eight miles through the woods with her husband's dinner which she had cooked meanwhile. Then came a few hours' lace-making, and the evening meal had to be prepared, and the goats fetched home and milked. No wonder these people grow old before their time, and that even the babies have a sad, grave look in their eyes ; for life is hard and sad and grave to them — snow for eight months, coarse food, and biting poverty.

We turned from the village up a steep path of stone steps between fields of uncut hay. Here and there a great grey rock peeped out of the flowery mass, encrusted too with flowers — saxifrages with feathery heads of white blooms and hard leaves

that look as if they were cut out of stone, and red-leaved houseleeks, and the exquisite dark blue veronica. While every crack in the walls was crammed full of ferns.

After passing the last chalets — where, later in the afternoon, the whole village congregates to meet the goats as they return from their day's wanderings in the high Alps — we found ourselves fairly in the Blumenthal. It is about three quarters of a mile broad, and a mile and a half long, surrounded on three sides by walls of grass sloping steeply up to rocky cliffs, which rise at the upper end to some two thousand feet, and are part of the first slopes of the Schilthorn. The Almendhübel rose green and fir-crowned on our right ; the precipitous rocks of the Schiltgrat on our left ; and down the middle of the valley, from the snows of the farthest wall, rushed the beautiful Mürrenbach between high rocks which broke it into scores of little waterfalls.

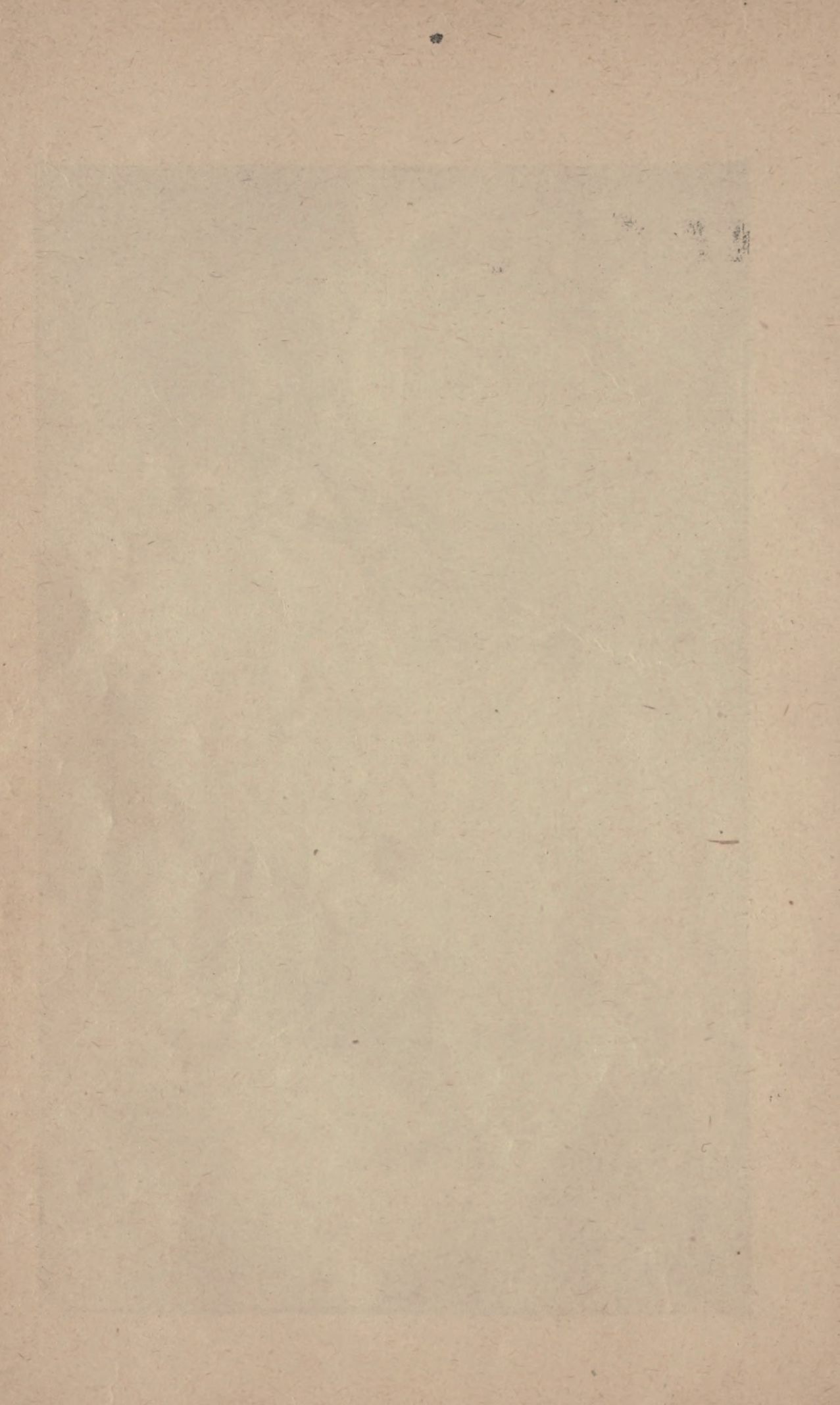
The hay was white with ranunculus and blue with forget-me-nots ; but our object was to search a mass of rocks at the upper end of the valley, and

for this point we made with as little delay as possible. It was not easy however to get on very fast. Every moment we had to stop and exclaim with joy and wonder over some fresh treasure. First there was a bed of the narcissus-flowered anemone, just coming into full bloom, the unopened buds pink like a bunch of apple-blossom. The short, damp turf was studded with the exquisite little pink *primula farinosa*. The great blue gentian opened its deep blue corolla to the sun beside the smaller Bavarian gentian, with its almost sky-blue flowers, and the grand golden mountain geum, whose blooms are as large as a penny. The rocks themselves were covered with a carpet of close-growing flowers : and at last on one I espied a bunch of cold gray-green leaves, with smooth, hard edges, and a white powdering over them.

I screamed to Carrie that I had found the *Auricula*, and rushed to the spot. Alas ! I was too late. It was the *Auricula* ; but instead of a bunch of flowers it only bore a head of half-ripe seed-vessels.

Nothing daunted, we determined to push on





further. Above us lay great sheets of snow. There surely we could not be too late, for it was still winter. As we neared them, myriads of delicate white crocuses were springing up through the burnt brown grass, mingled with the tiny purple parasols of the soldanella, and round each heap of stones there was a fringe of small richly-scented oxlip. Where the snow had melted grew thousands of the splendid white Alpine anemone, and its even more beautiful sister the sulphur anemone — two of the grandest of all Swiss flowers. We gathered them by handfuls, and they glorified our bare hotel rooms for many a day.

But even they were forgotten, when, with a yell of joy I rushed to a big stone heap. On the very top grew a suburb golden head of my Auricula. It was in full perfection, and the scent was more delicious than honey or attar or all the rich perfumes of the East. My prize was won. And it was soon safe with our other spoils in the plant basket which Carrie — an experienced mountaineer — insisted on carrying, strapped over her shoulder.

If we had been wise we should have gone straight

home, for the sun had disappeared behind heavy clouds, and the valley looked dark and forbidding. But having come so far we determined to go still further. There was a tempting green "col" or sort of pass, on the wall of the valley between the Schwarzhorn and the Schiltgrat, and this we thought we would try to reach. It would be such fun to do a bit of real mountain climbing all alone and unaided. A smooth green slope, broken here and there by piles of stones or a solitary rock, led up to the *col*; and on we went.

Never was green slope more cruelly deceptive. I am afraid to say at what angle it lay. We wore heavy nailed boots, and had strong alpenstocks — none of the poor, weak, amateur things that you buy at Interlaken with names of mountains rudely burnt on them; but good tough ash sticks that could bear a man's weight — and I know that even with these helps I could hardly keep my feet as I toiled up sideways like a crab. For it was in reality a mass of the finest slate detritus covered with vegetation, which recent rain had made as slippery as so much ice. Once on it, to return was impos-

sible. So with great difficulty I managed to reach a large boulder which gave me firm foothold. Cushions of the minute moss pink, *silene acaulis*, covered the rock, and I sat admiring it while I waited for Carrie, who was laden with the heavy plant basket, to join me.

While I was waiting and resting I suddenly heard a roar and a rattle that made me spring to my feet with a cry of warning to Carrie. Two big boulders came bounding down towards us from the upper cliffs. Down they came with savage leaps, and ever-increasing velocity, making straight, it seemed to me, for my companion. But mercifully they passed between us within half a dozen yards of where she stood, and plunging on, buried themselves in the snow far below.

As soon as they had disappeared Carrie scrambled on to the shelter of my rock ; and there we cowered for a moment, hardly knowing which way to go. We looked up to see if any man or any animal was on the cliffs above, and had dislodged the stones. But not a living thing was in sight.

Then we knew that the mountain itself was

stoning us ; and we also knew that if one of these stones struck us we should never get back to Mürren again.

It was no good, however, staying where we were. So gathering together all our courage we hurried on again up the cruel green slope. Every instant I expected to hear or see another of those horrible black boulders bounding down upon us. But at last we gained the top of the *col* in safety ; and following a tiny goat path up a knife-edge of shaly rock some six inches wide, with deep precipices on either hand, we threw ourselves panting and breathless on the wet turf at the top of the Schiltgrat. Here a glorious view of mountain and valley, rock and snow lay before us. We were six thousand nine hundred and seventy feet above the sea, and one thousand six hundred and forty-nine feet above Mürren.

But rain-clouds were rolling up from the valley, so we dared not stay to look at views or gather Alpen-rose. We were now on the border of a high and dry Alp ; and finding a good path we set off for home, reaching the hotel in forty-five

minutes, drenched to the skin, but triumphant at our exploit, and very thankful for our escape.

Next day we told Elizabeth where we had been.

“Ach ! Fraülein,” she cried in horror, “but it was at the peril of your lives. The mountain — the Mürrenberg — is wicked. He throws stones at all who come. Many times he has killed our people. Ach ! for the love of heaven do not be so rash again.”

And I can assure you we took her advice.

“LITTLE CAPTAIN” OF BUCKSKIN CAMP.

BUCKSKIN was “snowed up.” The dam was broken, the ditch frost-bound, and the sluice-box, snow-drifted, trembled no longer to the rush of the laboring water.

On the trail across the Range the snow lay shoulder-deep in ever-accumulating drifts. Snow-slides were frequent and crossing was alike arduous and dangerous ; but Scandinavian Charley, the mailcarrier, equipped with snow-shoes, with the pouch strapped on his back, still kept up irregular communication with the outer world. For though Buckskin was a placer mining camp only, and most of its summer inhabitants had gone at the close of the working season to more genial winter quarters, the gulch was not wholly deserted ; and from some half a dozen of the cabins straggling

along it smoke arose on the frosty mountain air.

Near the head of the gulch, surrounded by a few naked saplings of leafless quaking asp, a tumble-down cabin had been carelessly pitched so close to the stream as to catch unceasingly the murmur of its flow. From the low chimney of this structure a thick black smoke was pouring, and the door being open for better draft, a rich root of pitch pine was seen blazing in the fireplace. This was the winter quarters of Kentucky Bill; and he himself was seated on the doorstep, adding with a sheath knife to the many carvings with which the slab door-frame was already ornamented. From where he sat a well-trodden footpath, leading below could be traced all down the gulch, and every little while he turned and looked along it — for this hospitable proprietor was expecting a guest in whose honor supper was smoking on the hearth within. No rough-and-ready rambler of the pick and pan was Kentucky Bill — a trim-built young fellow, not great as to stature, but then if the heart was the measure of men Kentucky Bill would have stridden forth a giant in Buckskin.

As he notched the door and watched the trail, a small figure came out of a cabin below and took its way upward. On its approach he arose. "Hello, Little Captain," he said, as he stooped and took his expected guest by the hand. "I've been a-waiting for you. Come right in. I reckon we can scare up something for supper."

With one dexterous twist he placed his single stool before the fire and lifted his guest on it. On the hearth a coffee pot was bubbling and by its side a bake-oven sat simmering. On bended knee the host lifted the lid and peeped within. A savory steam arose.

"Grouse pot pie!" cried the guest in tones of gratification, after a long inhalation. "That's what I like best of anything."

"No?" said Kentucky Bill; "well, I kinder reckoned you would. Now, Little Cap, you pull off your hat and smooth down your hair and I'll pour out the coffee and chunk up the fire."

This latter operation the host performed with a kick of his miner's boot and sent a blaze through the cabin. Meantime Little Cap endeavors with

both hands to get the tangles out of his neglected hair. In the firelight one sees what a very little fellow he is, with a delicate face and eyes of innocence, whom every one at first look takes for a girl and all voices in addressing —

Soften, sleeken every word

As if speaking to a bird.

But in no fitting bird's plumage was Little Cap attired. A pair of ill-shaped heelless shoes cut from old boot-tops covered his feet. His trousers were a pair of old overalls cut down, with long and straggling stitches marking the seams. A miner's red flannel shirt fell from his shoulders and swept his heels and over all was an old slouched hat that barely left visible the point of his dimpled chin — but this head-covering lay now on the floor as he strove to make his toilet.

It was Little Cap's father who had fashioned this dress. For his mother — alas, for Little Cap — had died on the Overland Trail and lay buried far Eastward in the sand-hills. Of her he had only the dimmest memory of a face under a limp sun-

bonnet, but his father often told him about her. "And so, Cap," he always said, "your pore ma got mighty tired on the trail, fur our travellin' was slow, and she started on ahead to kinder pint the way fur me and you to foller. And so 'she crossed the Range' long before we got nigh the mount'ins. And she's waiting fur me and you over on tother side of the cross on yon mount'in, now." And while Cap would look at the cross marked out by snow-filled fissures on the mountain's breast, and almost expect to see her standing there, his "pa" would struggle with a sigh, and look over his clothes with a face of melancholy. "Well, well, it ain't to be expected, I reckon, that a prospector could fix up a chile's clothes like his ma. *I can't, no how.*"

The pot pie had vanished and Little Cap sat looking in the fire. Suddenly he spoke :

"How long is it before Christmas, Bill?"

"Two days yet."

"Uncle Kentucky Bill," he said earnestly, fixing his trusting eyes on Bill's face, "did you ever see Santa Claus yourself?"

"I did," Bill said solemnly.

"Where 'bouts?"

"It was at home," Bill replied, with a retrospective look in the fire. "I was a boy then myself, but bigger than you are now, Cap, and I was out in the woods. The woods there ain't like these here soft pine and silvery spruces, but good honest hard timber such as oak and hickory that sheds its leaves and don't look everlastingly the same, and bears acorns for pigs to eat and hickory nuts that's good for boys instead of useless pine cones. And the snow don't fall there like it does here and I wish — I wish, Little Cap, you and me was there to-day a-going to keep Christmas at home."

"But about Santa Claus," Little Cap persisted, as Bill made a long pause.

"O yes," Bill continued. "Yes. Let me see. I was out in the woods a-setting on the limb of a big oak snag, poking a stick in a gray squirrel's hole just to see if he was at home, when Santa Claus he came by right under me."

"What was he like?" his listener interrupted. "And was he driving reindeer?"

"Yes, he was driving reindeer, four of them," Bill

said, stirring the fire with his boot in an effort to stir up his recollection also. "And he was like — just what I told you the other day, Cap, you remember?"

"Yes, I remember. Do you think, uncle Kentucky Bill, he will come here this Christmas? And how can he get here with his reindeer, and snow always falling, so even the black tails and the elk can't get through it?"

"That's so," said Bill, meditatively. "You're about right. And then, too, this camp is a long way out of his road. And I kinder think if I was you" — and he looked in hesitation at the earnest face upturned to his own — "if I was you, I would be a brave little Captain and if he didn't come this Christmas bear right up and wait for next."

"That's a long way off and I wanted to see him awful bad after all you told me," said Little Captain in a tone that gave small indication of "bearing up." "And, Bill, I've kept one stockin' most as good as new to hang up like you said I must."

Kentucky Bill looked at his brimming eyes and was smitten with remorse. For it was from him and him alone, that the lonely Little Captain had

obtained his knowledge of Santa Claus. He turned to the door. Up the gulch his eyes ran to the notch in the hills where the trail wound out. And then all around and above to where the Holy Cross shone clear on the cloudless mountain. No storm-signs were afloat. For a moment he stood at the door looking, then entering, he laid a hand caressingly on the grief-bowed head.

“Now, don’t you cry, Little Cap,” he said, “for seeing that you expect him so bad I reckon he’ll be here after all. I’ve kinder thought about it and he’ll leave his reindeer on the other side of the Range, and tramp across on snow-shoes like Scandinavian Charley does, and fetch you what he can. When a boy is as little as you and ain’t got no ma besides it wouldn’t be exactly on the square in Santa Claus to go and forget you. He ain’t a-going to do it. Just hang up your stockin’, Little Cap, and keep your eyes open on Christmas Eve and Santa Claus will come in the regular way right down the chimbley of your pa’s cabin.”

As many as a dozen times on Christmas Eve did Little Cap tread the path to Kentucky Bill’s cabin.

To his ever-increasing surprise he found no one there and the fireless hearth told the owner had been long absent. In much wonder thereat and tingling anticipation of the coming of Santa Claus, he was too much excited to eat the supper set before him by the plenteous hand of his pa. Afterwards, too, when night and his bedtime came, he sat sleeplessly on a log by the fire, turning his head like a little mountain owl to the talk of the prospectors, who one by one had dropped in.

Time passed; as they sat and talked, he arose and slipped unnoticed from the cabin for one more look, as he said to himself, to see if Kentucky Bill had come home.

Silently his little figure went up the path, his head bobbing along just even with the snow bank on either side. He found the cabin dark and then he thought he would cross the gulch and go just a little way up on the opposite side and he could then see the trail where it wound out of the gulch, and may be if Santa Claus was coming down it, he might, by happy chance, see him.

The thought was inspiring. The crusted surface

of the snow bore his light weight and up and up the slope he climbed until further progress was checked by a huge granite rock. Against this he leaned, out of breath, to rest.

The night was cold but still and clear and over the slope above his head the moon was rising. Where he stood was still in shadow, but the moonbeams struck fair on the opposite side of the gulch and sparkling on the frosted snow made all there almost as bright as day. Huge rocks of granite arose here and there and cast long shadows on the snow, and above these, on the crest of the slope, the bare trunks that marked the track of some mountain fire stood up, clear-cut, like silver sticks. Above these yet, holding its holy sign on high, the towering mountain loomed in the moonlight.

Looking along on the opposite side he could see for some distance where the trail ran upward. And as he looked he thought he could distinguish an object moving down. He held his breath and listened. No air was stirring and he could catch faintly the sounds of snow-shoes slipping over the snow. Down over the drifts the figure of a man

came in sight, white with hoarfrost that sparkled in the moonlight, with snow-shoes on his feet and a pack on his back. Could this indeed be Santa Claus? The small watcher's heart gave one big bound and then almost stopped for awe and pleasure. He shrank closer in the shadow of the rock as Santa Claus came on, and saw him stop on striking into the harder trodden path and take off his encumbering snow-shoes. Twirling them over his shoulder he then resumed his way.

He had gotten nearly as far down as Kentucky Bill's cabin when, without an instant's warning, the opposite slope seemed to Little Cap to give way, and slide into the gulch with a crunching sound. Fine particles of frost and snow filled the air and as they settled he saw to his terror that Santa Claus and Kentucky Bill's cabin had alike disappeared.

The frosty air was cold but Little Cap flung away the old coat that always tripped him up and flew along the crusted snow down the gulch. His father and the others had been aroused by the noise of the slide and they were coming up to the

scene when he suddenly rolled down at their feet.

“O pa,” he gasped, out of breath, “the mountain — fell down — right on — old Santa Claus !”

His father gave a cry of surprise and stooped and raised him in his arms.

“Why, Cap,” he said, “I thought you was asleep long ago !” Then he spoke hurriedly to the others. “Maybe, men, Cap did see somebody, sure ’nough, and we’d better get our shovels and prospect a little on the trail above Kentucky Bill’s shanty. Bill was in big luck to go away yesterday and not be there when the slide struck it.”

As he spoke he turned into his cabin with Little Cap, and tucking him between the blankets bade him go to sleep right off and they would go and find Santa Claus.

With shouldered shovels the rescuers started to search the snow. The slide had been a large one changing the familiar appearance of the gulch. Kentucky Bill’s cabin with its well-known surroundings was no longer to be seen, and of the tapering quaking asps only the topmost boughs stuck up like low bushes from the heaped-up snow. Passing

around at a little distance, they came on signs that quickened their hearts and steps alike. There some one, on striking the well-trodden trail, had stopped and taken off a pair of snow-shoes and below were fresh tracks pointing downward. Judging by these Santa Claus must have been all right thus far, for he had left in the freshly fallen frost the O K plainly printed by the nails in the heavy sole of the prospector's boot which he wore. Following the tracks down to where trail and all were obliterated by the slide they scattered over it. It was only a moment when Little Cap's pa gave a cry that drew all to him. There, sticking partly out of the snow, just on the edge of the slide, was a pair of snowshoes. Ah, never at the gleam of gold had they dug as they dug then, fearing all too late to find their wearer with his heart snowbound forever.

A short while that seemed all too long, and a wild hurrah rang out and was caught up and sent back by the frosty hills. In slow procession down the gulch the little band of diggers came and stopped at the cabin wherein lay Little Cap. He, himself, wide awake, sat up in bed and watched

them enter. They carried, to his surprise, not Santa Claus indeed, but Kentucky Bill, somewhat bruised and battered, it is true, but still himself.

“Boys, give me that pack,” he said in a voice just above a whisper as the “boys” laid him on the bed beside Little Cap. “Now, Cap,” he whispered as the pack was placed between them, “you open it. Old Santa Claus himself gave it to me for you. For knowing he wasn’t used to travelling out of his sled I went over to make sure he didn’t get off the trail into the drifts and we both came footing it along together, but he was late — kinder delayed by slides and such — and so he had to hurry on and left it with me to bring to you.”

“O uncle Kentucky Bill,” said Little Cap as he knelt on the bed and looked down at him with soft eyes, “did the mount’in fall on you, too?”

Bill smiled as he replied almost in his old voice, “I was beginning to think it had, but you needn’t feel so sorry, Cap. Your pa says my old shanty is safe to stay till summer under forty feet of snow and I reckon I’d be a-laying under it now myself — but for you and old Santa Claus.”

THE RUBBER BABY.

SILVER'S father was a rubber trader. He had built himself a rude lodge on the banks of the Madeira, one of the tributaries of the Amazon, in the very wildest part of the great wilderness of Brazil. Here he bought the crude rubber from the Indian collectors, and stored it in a warehouse, which was hardly more than a tent, until the arrival of some boat by which he could send it to Para.

It was a strange place for such a little girl as Silver. The houses were elevated on stilts, for the river ran in front and sometimes overflowed its banks. The palm-thatched roofs projected like those of Swiss chalets, over balconies where the hammocks were hung for the siesta ; at night they were carried into the interior, and the door (there were no windows) closed to keep out the mosquitoes.

You can imagine that with such a house Silver spent most of her time out-of doors; and here there was much to interest her. Philomena, their Indian cook, had all out-doors for her kitchen, and prepared their dinner at a gypsy kettle, very much like the contrivances that ladies place on their lawns, but instead of *coleus* and other gay-leaved plants there was a fire beneath and a good turtle soup or some other dainty in the kettle. For Philomena was an artist in her profession, and they had some dishes at this out-of-the-world place that would have made an epicure tear his hair with envy, and that could not be had for any amount of money at the Astor House or Delmonico's.

Their table was set under a beautiful palm, with a rather short trunk, whose huge fan-shaped leaves seemed to be gathered into a bouquet and spread on all sides, giving the tree the shape of a feather duster. All around them was the forest, so dense that it was impossible to penetrate it to any distance except by the paths made by the *seringueiros* or rubber collectors.

Silver had gone once with her father to the hut of one of the gatherers, a poor Indian woman, who spent her days wading through marshy ground where lurked poisonous water-snakes, and treading jungles

where jaguars had been found. The woman's name was Justimiama. Her husband had been a rubber gatherer too, but he had died, and now she followed alone his arduous and perilous occupation.

Have any of you ever been in the country in "sugaring time?" If you have you know how the maple trees are tapped, the sap collected and boiled into a waxy syrup and then cooled into maple sugar. The *Siphonia Elastica*, as the botanists call the rubber tree, is tapped in much the same way. Justimiama, as she went out on her daily rounds, would go to the nearest rubber tree, make a number of cuts all around the trunk, and fasten under each cut a little cup, made from clay, to catch the milky sap. Then she would pass on to the next tree, and as they did not grow very near together, it would take her nearly half a day to reach the farthest one on her route. Then she would retrace her steps, and as she went back, empty the little cups into queer pails made from calabashes. These calabashes had a braided covering and handle by which they could be carried; they were egg-shaped and about the size of your head. When she reached home, Justimiama emptied the rubber sap into the shell of a great turtle, which served as a trough or basin. She had just done this when little Silver and her father arrived at the cabin.



TAPPING THE RUBBER TREE.

“Eat your dinner, Justimiama, and I will show this little girl how rubber is prepared,” said Mr. Bonbright.

But the poor woman was so delighted to see the child that she could hardly eat her coarse farina for looking at her.

Outside the hut was a tall earthen jar or jug which Silver examined curiously, for she could not imagine for what use it could be intended. It could not hold water or any other liquid, for it had no bottom.

“What do you think it is, Silver,” asked Mr. Bonbright.

“It looks like a lamp chimney,” replied Silver; “but it is much too big.”

“It is a chimney, however,” said Mr. Bonbright; and collecting some palm nuts from a little heap near by, he made a small bonfire and then placed the great earthen chimney over it. The smoke issued from the top in thick white clouds.

Mr. Bonbright then took a long wooden paddle which lay beside the turtle shell, and dipping up some of the rubber sap with a small calabash, poured it on both sides of the paddle. He then held it in the smoke just over the chimney, turning it carefully so that not a drop fell. The smoke hardened the

sap into a leathery substance, and at the same time changed it to a yellowish color. As fast as it hardened he poured on more sap, until quite a mass of rubber had collected on the paddle.

Justimiana, who had finished her farina, now came and cut off the rubber with a knife, remarking that Mr. Bonbright was almost as skilful a workman as herself. Then Silver wanted to try; and as the great paddle was too heavy for her to balance, Mr. Bonbright whittled out a smaller one, and she made her little cake of rubber, which her father said should be sent with the rest down the river to Para, whence it would go to the United States, and there be manufactured into — who could tell what! Perhaps a rubber baby; and if it was he would write to have it sent back for his little girl to play with.

This remark of her father's about a rubber baby, created a deep impression on Silver's mind. She had never had a doll, and she fancied that this rubber baby might laugh, and creep, and eat, and sleep, like other babies which she had seen.

"When will the baby come?" asked Silver.

"I think you may safely expect her about Christmas time," replied Mr. Bonbright; "I shall ask Santa Claus to bring her."

The face of the Indian woman lightened at the



LITTLE SILVER MAKES A CAKE OF RUBBER.

mention of Christmas. "Come and spend part of that day with me, little one," she said, kindly, as her guests were leaving.

"What does she know about Christmas?" Silver asked of her father, as they followed the trail through the forest.

"She was educated at one of the Jesuit Missions, and has not forgotten the merry-makings and shows with which it was celebrated."

"I wonder whether she hangs up her stocking," thought Silver, for her mother had taught her to keep Christmas Eve in the northern fashion ; and then she laughed softly to herself as she thought that Justimiama had no stockings to hang up, and no chimney but that over which the rubber was smoked. "She was very kind to me," thought Silver ; and she asked aloud, "Did she ever have a little girl of her own?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Bonbright ; "a black-haired, bright-eyed little girl, who made the hut a very cheerful place ; but when she grew up she ran away with a worthless Indian, and her poor mother has never seen her since."

It seemed a long time to Silver until Christmas, but she was a patient child and waited without fretting, though the rubber baby that was to come was much in her thoughts. Philomena taught her to

sew, and she busied herself making a little white cotton shirt for the baby. Philomena gave her a piece of coarse linen lace which she had herself made, and Silver sewed it around the neck of the little garment which she hoped would fit the baby.

The day before Christmas, Silver paid a visit to her friend, the rubber gatherer, carrying with her one of her little stockings, which she hung beside the earthen chimney out-of-doors, explaining to Justimiama that they had no chimney at her own home, and she was afraid Santa Claus would not find it.

The woman smiled, and determined to make the child some sweetmeats, and a little arrow-root pudding, flavored with the seed of a climbing orchid. The pudding would have had a familiar taste to you, for the orchid was the vanilla from which an extract is made, which I have no doubt your mother sometimes puts in her puddings.

When Christmas morning came, the path into the forest was white, not with snow but with the falling petals of flowers ; for the tropic sun beamed down as warmly as it does on our Fourth of July, and Silver's muslin dress was thinner, and there was less of it than any which you ever wore at her size. She carried in her hand the little shirt which she had made, and wondered very much whether it would fit

her rubber baby which she had no doubt was waiting for her by the chimney.

Justimiama had expected her little friend, and had risen a great deal earlier than usual to put her hut in order and place the little cake of sweetmeat in the child's stocking, and the calabash of pudding beside it. Then she had stuck a rude cross, which she made of palm branches, before her door, and which she decorated with beautiful flowers from the forest in honor of the founder of Christmas; and then dashing the tears from her eyes, as she remembered that the last time she had celebrated Christmas was before her own daughter had left her, the lonely woman took her hatchet and calabashes and set out on her daily round of rubber gathering.

Some time after she had gone, a haggard, wild-looking woman pushed her way through another path toward the rubber gatherer's hut. She paused when she reached it in dumb surprise at the sight of the cross at the door. Then some old recollection seemed to stir within her, and a milder, softened look came to her face. She peered cautiously into the interior of the hut, and the fact that it was empty seemed to reassure her. She sat down wearily beside the cross; and a baby, that was fastened in a sort of sling across her shoulders, cried aloud.

The little thing was hungry ; so was the woman for a whole day had passed since she had eaten. Silver's pudding in the calabash caught her eye, and she snatched it up ravenously, but she did not taste a morsel. She held the calabash to the baby's lips, and the greedy little thing drained every drop ; then, its hunger satisfied, it fell asleep on her knees.

All this time, Silver was coming nearer and nearer through the forest. Her heart was so light that she sang a Christmas carol that an old Spanish lady had taught her. The words were very quaint and odd. This was the way it ran :

He was born in a hovel
Of spider webs full :
Beside him there grovel
An ox and a mule ;
And King Melchior bade,
To honor the day,
And that none might be sad,
The musicians should play.

I'm a poor little gypsy
From over the sea :
I bring him a chicken
That cries "*quir-i-qui* ;"
For each of us, sure,
Should offer his part ;
Be you ever so poor,
You can give him your heart.



ON HER WAY TO THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING.

Good night, Father Joseph:
Madonna so mild,
We leave with regret
Your adorable child,
With the crown on his locks,
The symbol of rule:
Sleep in peace, Senor Ox!
God bless you, Sir Mule!

The crouching woman heard the sweet, young voice carolling joyfully — clearer and still clearer. She rose, and lifting the earthen chimney placed the sleeping baby under it, and hurried away by the same path over which she had come.

When Silver reached the place and saw the floral cross, she clapped her hands with delight, and exclaimed that now at last she had a Christmas tree, a real Christmas tree, such as her mother had told her the children in the North had at Christmas time. She was rather noisy in her glee, and the baby under the chimney awoke and cried.

This did not surprise Silver in the least; it must be, she thought, her rubber baby — but where was it? She looked in the stocking and found a little mould of guava jelly, shaped like a fish and wrapped in a leaf. This was very nice, but it was not the baby.

But as the baby kept on crying, Silver soon discovered where it was hidden, and pushed the chimney

over. She concluded that as it was too large to put in her stocking, Santa Claus had dropped it down the chimney ; and she set about trying on the little shirt which she had brought.

This was all the more easily done, as the baby had on no clothes whatever, except a necklace of beads with a little silver cross. It seemed pleased with its new robe, and allowed Silver to hold it, and sing to it, and feed it with her jelly-fish — as she very appropriately called her little mould of sweetmeat.

As for Silver, she was never so happy in all her life. Here was the rubber baby for which she had waited so long. It was just the color of the rubber when sent away — a light, yellowish brown ; and as her father had told her that one of the desirable peculiarities of rubber babies was that they would wash, she brought a little water from the spring near by and began to scrub its face, and her happiness was if possible increased when she found that its complexion did not wash off.

Presently, Justimiama returned, and then all of Silver's happiness was destroyed ; for when she heard Silver's account, she looked at the baby very earnestly and the little cross on the necklace. Then she shrieked aloud the name of her lost child, and seizing the baby in her arms darted down the path,

her instinct telling her that the baby's mother was her own daughter and that she was not far distant. They came back presently together, with their arms around each other, laughing and crying hysterically, and chattering like a pair of monkeys.

Silver was disgusted and took her leave. It appeared that Santa Claus had not intended the baby for her after all, but for the old rubber gatherer. Tears of disappointment welled up in her eyes as she walked toward home. She had lost her rubber baby and the little shirt, as well as her pudding and jelly fish which the little gourmand had eaten; and though her father met her with a rubber doll with a bright pink and white complexion that would not come off and a bright pink and white dress that would, it was long before she could be comforted.

A RIDE ON A CENTAUR.

SID'S mother had a way of telling him stories just before he went to bed, and Sid loved bed-time more than any other hour in the day. I couldn't begin to tell you all he had learned in this way nor all the places he had been to. When people travel in strange countries they have to have a guide who knows the fine roads and wonderful places to be seen in that part of the world. Now Sid was a little traveller just setting out on a very long journey and it was a very fortunate thing for him that he had his mother as a guide.

When night was coming on and it was getting dark out of doors, the open wood fire was lighted in the back parlor ; and then in the glow which made everything in the room look so queer, with his hand in hers, Sid's mother took him off to other lands and even to the Moon.

One night, not long ago, as Sid sat looking into the fire with his head against his mother's knee, she said :

“Come, Sid, let's go to Greece and take a ride on a Centaur.”

Nothing could have pleased Sid more. He hadn't the slightest idea what a Centaur was, but he loved to ride, and it made very little difference to him what he rode on.

Besides he was tired to-night and didn't feel like walking ; so, with his eyes half shut, and feeling very, very comfortable, Sid waited for the Centaur to take him off.

“Well,” said his mother, in a voice that was always very sweet to him ; “there's a little country in Greece called Thessaly, and it's full of caves, and beautiful valleys as well. In one of the caves lived a Centaur named Chiron. He had the body of a horse, but instead of a horse's neck and head he had the head and shoulders and body of a man down to the waist. He was a very old and wise Centaur and although he lived in a cave he loved the open air on the high mountains.”

How much longer Sid's mother talked I don't know. Although she did not notice it, Sid was gone. He had been carried off by a Centaur. While he was looking into the fire and wondering what made

the coals take such queer shapes he heard a strange noise outside. It wasn't exactly the neighing of a horse and it was not exactly the voice of a man, but it was something between the two.

"That's very funny," said Sid to himself; "wonder what it is!"

In a moment or two he heard it again and it sounded a great deal nearer than before. Then there was a sharp canter down the road and the clatter of hoofs past the windows. Sid's mother did not seem to pay any attention to the noise, but she had stopped talking — at least Sid thought she had, and he got up very quietly, stepped out into the hall and went to the side door. There wasn't any moon but the stars were shining brightly and there, going round and round the circle of grass under the apple trees, Sid saw a splendid black horse. As it came round again to the place where he stood Sid saw that it was not a horse after all, for above its forelegs it had the head and body of a man.

It was a Centaur. Sid had never seen one before and he was sure nobody in that neighborhood owned one. Where it had come from he hadn't the slightest idea, and if it hadn't been for the apple trees and the great, dark church beyond he would have believed he was dreaming.

The Centaur cantered around two or three trees more, and then, without saying a word, as he passed Sid, stretched out his arms, caught the boy, put him on his back and was off like a racer. No boy ever had such a ride before and I don't know that any one ever will again.

No sooner had the Centaur struck the road than he broke into a gallop and went thundering along through the night as if a thousand witches or some other horrible creatures were chasing him. His hoofs rang on the hard ground and struck sparks of fire out of the stones along the way. On and on they flew, past houses and orchards and ponds over which a white mist lay like a soft night dress. They leaped the tall gates without so much as dropping a penny for the keeper who was fast asleep in the little house, and they rushed over bridges as if there were no notices about fast driving posted up at either end. Faster and faster they flew along until fences and trees and barns were all mixed up together and Sid couldn't tell one from the other. He thought the Centaur couldn't go any faster, but he was mistaken, for he broke into a dead run and then such going! It took Sid's breath away. Every thing vanished and there wasn't any thing left in the world but himself and the Centaur and the wind that was trying its best

to blow him off. There wasn't any noise either. It was just one tremendous rush. It was like the flight of an arrow that goes straight through the air from the moment it leaves the bow till the moment it strikes the mark and there's hardly a breath between.

How long the ride was I don't know for Sid never could tell, but after a time the Centaur began to slacken speed, broke into a gallop, then into a gentle trot and finally stopped short. His broad flanks were steaming and he was wet from hoof to hoof, but he did not seem to mind it.

Sid had been a little frightened at first, and you must admit that it was rather alarming to be picked up and carried off like the wind by a Centaur — but he was a brave boy and soon forgot every thing but the splendid ride he was taking. As soon as the Centaur stopped he slipped down and stood on the ground.

Although it was night the air was so soft and pure and the stars shone so brightly through it that he could see it was a strange country. There were hills everywhere but they were green and although it was wild it looked beautiful as far as he could see.

The Centaur stretched himself on the ground and Sid saw that although his face was very queer it was quite intelligent. He seemed to be waiting to rest



himself. Sid wanted very much to talk with him but he wasn't sure that he ought to and he didn't know exactly what to say. There was so much of the horse about the Centaur that Sid couldn't make up his mind whether he really was a horse or a man.

The Centaur paid no attention to the boy for a long time but finally he turned to him and said:

"Well, how did you like it?"

The voice was queer, there was no doubt about that. It made him think of a horse, but the words were human. The Centaur could speak good English, there was no doubt about that either.

"It was just splendid," Sid answered. "What made you come for me?"

"Why," replied the Centaur, speaking slowly as if it were not easy for him to talk; "I knew you could ride and I was sent for you."

Sid could'nt understand why he could ride easier than any other boy. "Can't everybody ride?" he asked in a quick way he has when he is interested in anything.

"Oh, bless you, no," said the Centaur; "very few indeed; it all depends on your mind. Most boys wouldn't have seen me, much less kept on my back."

Sid thought that was very queer, but he asked no

more questions about it. He didn't feel very well acquainted yet.

"Who sent you for me ;" he continued at last.

"Chiron sent me," answered the Centaur getting on his legs, "and we must be off."

He put Sid on his back as before and started on a gentle canter. They were on the side of a mountain with here and there olive trees and pines.

"Where are we ?" asked Sid after a moment.

"Is this Thes—Thes— ?"

"Yes," said the Centaur ; "it's Thessaly."

"Where am I going ?"

"You are going to school," replied the Centaur.

That rather surprised Sid and didn't entirely please him. He thought he had enough of school by daylight without going at night too, but he said nothing, thinking it certainly must be a new kind of school if they had to send so far for scholars, and wondering whether his father, who was a minister, would be able to pay the bills.

The road which the Centaur took led them around the mountain and presently they came out into a little level space in the side of the mountain and in front of a cave. In the middle of this grassy place a Centaur was lying on his side, and around him were ten or more young men stretched full length on the

ground and leaning on their elbows, in a half circle.

Sid slid down to the ground and slipped into the little group without being noticed. The Centaur in the middle was very old, so old that he looked as if he had been alive for centuries ; and he had a very wise and beautiful face.

The young men were the most splendid fellows Sid had ever seen. They had beautiful forms and noble heads and fine, bright faces, and they had magnificent arms and chests. They looked like heroes, and I think most of them were.

This was the school and a very queer school it certainly was. Sid was eight years old and went to a Kindergarten where he had books and blocks and all kinds of things and here they hadn't so much as a scrap of paper. He was inclined to think it must be a poor affair, but he thought he would wait until he had heard some of the recitations before he made up his mind. That was the queerest thing of all—there weren't any recitations. No books, no desks, no black-boards, no recitations ! well, it certainly was a funny school. There wasn't even a roll called. If there had been Sid would have heard some strange names. That great splendid fellow at the end of the line, with his curly hair all in confusion about his noble head, was called Hercules, and the next was

Achilles and the next Theseus and then came Castor and Pollux, and Ulysses and Meleager and Æsculapius and others whose names I have forgotten.

While Sid was thinking about these things the old Centaur began to talk. His voice was very low and very sweet and somehow it made Sid feel that the teacher had seen everything there was to be seen in the world and knew everything there was to be known. School was evidently going to begin.

"I have told you," said the Centaur, very slowly, "about the Gods and the old times when the world was young. I have told of heroes and of the great things they did. I have taught you music which the Gods love, and medicine which is useful for men. I have told you how to be strong and high-minded and noble. I have taught you to be brave and true that you may do great things for yourself and the world. By day I have made your bodies firm and sinewy, and at night I made you think of the Gods who live beyond the stars. What shall I tell you now?"

Nobody spoke for a minute and then Ulysses, who had a very wise face for one so young, said: "Tell us of yourself, oh, Chiron."

This seemed to please everybody and all the scholars repeated the words:

"Tell us of yourself, oh, Chiron."

"The Centaurs," began Chiron after a little while, "were born long before men came into the world. It was a rough place then and needed somebody stronger than men to live in it. So the Gods made us with the strength and swiftness of the animals and yet with some of the thoughts and feelings of men. And we lived in caves and ran through the valleys, and leaped across the rushing streams and climbed the mountains. And we learned many things about the world and made it easier for men when they came. I think we were sent to do what animals couldn't do and that now you are come and grown strong to conquer even the animals, our work is done and we must soon die."

Just then a little bell rang. At first Sid thought school must be out, but the bell sounded very familiar to him. In fact it was the cuckoo clock in the front parlor striking nine.

"Bless me, Sid," said his mother; "you ought to have been in bed an hour ago."

SOME BAD BOYS OF BY-BURY.

BYBURY village was quite famous, in my day, for its smart boys—about a dozen of them, pretty near of an age, bright scholars, good fellows generally, and wide awake for any enterprise.

There could be stories told about their adventures, their camping-out, their fishing and boating trips, their many doings on land and water ; but I was not there to see. I was not one of them.

Poor little Andy !” they called me, for I was a cripple. Perhaps it was because I could not run, nor climb, nor do anything, hardly, that I admired them the more.

Fourth of July was their great day, of course ; it is the boys’ day everywhere in this land of freedom. They began it by ringing a certain church bell the moment midnight struck, which was the signal for all

the little cannons to blaze out. There were six churches in Bybury, and two of them had bells, which these youngsters had christened "Liberty Bell," and "Prohibition Bell." They were allowed to ring the former just as much as they pleased — and for that reason they did not care anything about it: they were forbidden to touch the other till sunrise of the Fourth — and for that reason they were determined to begin with it on the midnight before; and they always managed to do it.

Their only opposer was Captain Milliken, who had no motive in the world for the opposition, only once having said that he did not want it rung, he was bound to have his way — there are a good many such people. The boys liked the old gentleman, but they determined not to be beaten; and when you take twelve boys against one man, you may be sure that there's mischief ahead. His only right of refusal was in the fact that he was sexton, and also owned more pews in the meeting-house than any other man. However, from year to year the townspeople said, "Let them ring! It is a better way to celebrate than to use so much powder."

On this particular Fourth, Captain Milliken made great boasts that he had got the doors and windows so securely fastened that the boys would have to give it

up. That being equal to a challenge, no boy of any spunk, and certainly no Bybury boy, *would* give it up. The evening before the Fourth there was a mysterious gathering in an unoccupied house near by; and to this rendezvous one of the big boys, Tom Miliken, the Captain's nephew, carried me on his back. "Because," said he, "we want your help."

It turned out that they all intended to get about two hours' sleep on some old carriage robes which they spread on the floor, and at half-past eleven sharp I was to call them and then wait orders.

It was a lovely night, warm, dewy, starry, but so still! The villagers had gone to bed early to have a little repose before the inevitable cannonading begun — they always did at Bybury, for there was no sleep after midnight in that neighborhood till that set of boys had outgrown "celebrating." They seemed long hours to me, for, trusting to my known wakefulness, every boy of them had dropped off, and I sat curled up by a window with Tom's watch in my pocket, till the time slipped by.

Punctual to the moment I had them up; and after a whispered consultation they went out to try means of ingress, while I kept watch and was to signal if any one approached.

"It's no good to try, for the Commodore" — that

was what they called him — “has been as good as his word. So now for it!” said Tom, at last, and pulling off his shoes and cap, he began to climb the lightning-rod.

If you do not know how the rods used to be put up on meeting-houses, you will not understand the foolhardiness of this proceeding. Instead of following the walls of the building — in which case the risk would have been fearful enough — the rod descended slanting in mid-air from the belfry, far out to the main building, so that for a long distance it was out in space, swaying at the least touch ; then from the eaves it run down the side of the house, and then was supposed to be secured firmly in the ground. But this one had been broken off a yard or more at the bottom, so it was rather a shaky and uncertain thing at the best, besides being constructed in pieces which were hooked together in a loose way. It was rough and rusty, and about as large round as a man's thumb. Such was the ladder by which Tom Milliken proposed to climb up to the high bell tower, on the dark side of the church, with no light to guide him except what came from the stars.

Tom Milliken was not afraid of anything ; but now, when the boys saw him slowly going up, hand over hand, in the darkness, they began to realize what

a perilous feat it was, and begged in low voices :

“ Tom ! Tom ! do come down ! Let’s give it up ! ”

But Tom whispered back, “ Stop your noise ! take care of my cap and shoes, and stop your noise ! ’

Not a word was spoken after that. Almost breathless the boys watched from below, holding fast the end of the rod to steady it, while I crept out and secured the cap and shoes. Meanwhile Tom gained the eaves, where he rested a few minutes before beginning the most dangerous part of the ascent. Slowly moving up, we saw his dark form against the sky ; then we lost sight of him as he swung into the shadow ; but in a moment he appeared climbing over the balustrade into the belfry.

I am sure we all felt like shouting our joy, but we kept silent and listened. Presently we heard him cautiously raising the trap door ; then creaking down the narrow, shaky stairs, which had long been considered unsafe, but yet allowed to remain as they were ; then he was blundering through the dark gallery ; and at last he was fumbling at the hasp which secured the vestry door on the inside.

Then they all rushed in, and old “ Prohibition Bell ” was rung as it had never been rung before — “ *Ding-dong, ding-dong,* ” as fast as it could go, it sounded on the still midnight air, and was echoed

back from the hills, rousing the whole village ; heads were popped out of windows along the street, and suppressed laughter was heard, for everybody knew how confident the Commodore had been.

The boys had rung it furiously for about ten minutes, and the little cannons had begun to speak on every corner, when from my watch-window I spied a lantern in the Commodore's door-yard. In another minute I had scattered the ringers ; and by the time he had appeared on the scene of action with the blacksmith, whom he had routed from his bed, there was not a boy visible, except the small fellows with their cannons on the nearest cross street, who were unable to tell him anything, simply because they did not know.

The culprits, however, were all within hearing, and lost not a word of the old gentleman's strong assertions, spoken loud on purpose for their ears, which he was shrewd enough to suppose were within hearing, that he would find out " who they are ; and I'll prosecute every one of them to the fullest extent of the law."

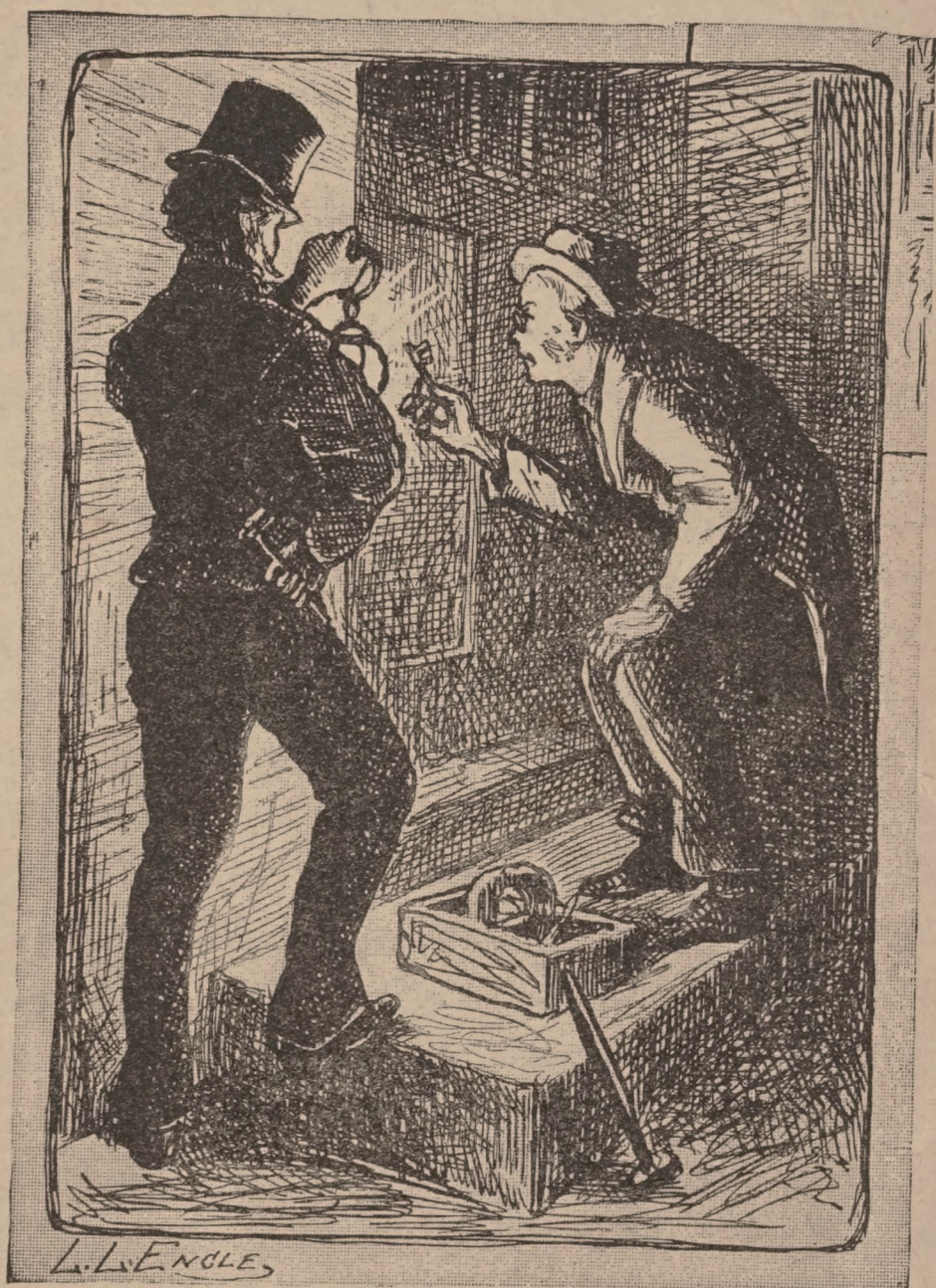
The two men searched everywhere, even to the belfry, from which their lantern shone like a beacon, and they tried every window and looked into every pew ;

then, giving it up, the blacksmith put a padlock on the outer door, and they departed.

The boys gave them just time enough to get home; then, at my sign, they started up from their hiding-places, and the bell began to toll, deep and strong and quick. Tom, who had planned for every possible contingency, had carried in his pocket, when he climbed up, a strong cord wound round a pebble to which one end was secured; the other he had tied to the clapper of the bell; then, unwinding, he had hurled the stone back down over the sheds; and now they were using this strong cord with a will.

The bell had boomed furiously for a few minutes, when the lantern appeared again in the Commodore's yard, and back he came with his companion. They found the church all right — not a window unfastened, and every door secure; so re-locking the outer ones, they proceeded to an inspection of the sheds. But while they were still in the vestibule, bending over the inner lock, Tom had slipped in and hidden himself in the wood closet. It did not require much searching on the part of the men to find the cord, which they tried to break by their united efforts, and succeeded by sawing it along the edge of the roof.

And now the sexton was so sure that the bell would be at rest for the remainder of the night that



THE COMMODORE MAKES SURE.



he laughed at the blacksmith when he proposed that they should sit on the meeting-house steps with their lantern and watch till daybreak, which was not very far off. He dispersed the small boys, bidding them, "Go home and go to bed, and come again at sunrise, then *I* will ring the bell *myself*; and *you* may all ring till your hands are blistered. As for those rascals," raising his voice, "if they have broken so much as a pane of glass in this house, I will have the law on them to-morrow!"

The boys had a pretty busy night of it, but they were not through yet. As soon as the familiar lantern had vanished in the Commodore's house, a window in the church was gently raised, a dark lantern in Tom's hand shone a moment there was a good deal of climbing in and out, of low talking, and the sound of tools being used, and certain other sounds, strongly suggesting that something was going on in the belfry. Then the boys dispersed just at daylight, agreeing to keep watch and see what happened next.

Promptly at sunrise came the sexton, and a crowd of small boys at his heels; a few men, too, had lounged along to the church steps, and looked in as he threw open the doors.

"And now," shouted the Commodore, "you may

have all the ringing you want. This is early enough for all orderly folks !”

So the little fellows snatched at the rope, and jerked with all their might — with no result.

“ Oh ! clear out !” said he, “ and see *me* do it ! There ! *That’s* the way to ring !” pulling with one vigorous sweep of his right arm, which drew the rope clear to the floor ; and so he kept on for a minute or two, a puzzled expression coming over his face ; then suddenly he called to the men outside. “ Seems to me this bell don’t ring, or else I have gone deaf all at once ! Hey ? ”

“ No,” cried one of the small boys, “ ’tain’t making no sound, Captain.”

The Commodore pulled and tugged, then took off his coat and worked away till his face was in a blaze, and beads of perspiration rolled down his cheeks.

“ Those young rascals !” he said, “ They must have tied the clapper.” Upon which, two men volunteered to go up and see. They soon returned with the intelligence that the clapper was “ gone entirely.” But the Commodore could not believe it, or was so obstinate that he *would* not till he had the evidence of his own eyes. Sure enough — gone it was.

Nor did it re-appear in its proper place till the

next Saturday night. When the sexton went to ring for church on Sunday morning, there it was, as if nothing had happened. Of course it made the talk of the town, and everybody thought that Bybury village had some rather remarkable boys. They were now given full permission to ring that bell as much as they wanted to at midnight before every coming Fourth of July as long as they lived ; *but* because they *could* do it, they did not care to, and never did, after that memorable occasion. And their secret has been kept all of these years — the boys are now men — and nobody knows to this day who took that clapper off and put it on again.

MISS VIOLET.

“O H, mother dear, you will, you must let me go!”

“I don’t see how I can, Mary. In the first place, I don’t approve of your visiting where you will get such high notions in your head as you will be sure to get at Mrs. Van Voorst’s ; and, in the second place, you have nothing suitable to wear at such a place. Oh, Mary, don’t tease me ; I don’t want you to go, for I know it will be bad for you in the end. You will get accustomed to a life that is just as much separated from yours as the Queen of England’s, and when you come back you will be discontented and pining for what you have left behind.”

“Mother, it is Violet Van Voorst herself that I want to visit a great deal more than anything else, though I shall enjoy beautiful Newport, too. And

it's so kind of her mother to wish to give me this pleasure ; and she wants me, too, not merely out of kindness but because she loves me."

Mrs. Harwood knitted her brows slightly. She had seen a good deal of trouble, and perhaps that was the reason she had for looking down on school-girl friendships.

"If Miss Violet Van Voorst loves you so much, *why* didn't she come oftener to see you when she was at school here?" she asked her eager daughter presently, and a little bitterly, perhaps.

"Mother, you always discouraged my bringing her home with me after that once, you know," answered Mary Harwood a little shyly.

"Well, I dare say I did, Mary ; for that once, as you call it, was rather an unfortunate visit. There was nothing in the world for tea but cold bread and butter and cookies, and I remember that the boys had come in and flung all their fishing-tackle in the front entry."

"But Violet was so pleased with everything, mother. You know how she praised your bread, and that delicious butter of ours, and how she apologized for eating so many cookies ; and when you spoke of the boys' fishing-tackle she laughed, and said it was just like *her* brothers."

"Oh, your Miss Violet knows how to say polite things, Mary; but, all the same, I shouldn't care to be patronized by a fashionable young lady," returned Mrs. Harwood laughing a little, but quite in earnest.

Mary did not reply. It was of no use she said to herself, for mother did not understand Violet, and would be sure to think she did the wrong thing. After this conversation she was no little surprised the next morning to hear her mother say:

"Mary, I have thought that perhaps I am not doing right by keeping you from visiting Violet Van-Voorst. You are sixteen, now, and ought to face things for yourself, I dare say, and to see all sides. I didn't mean to be hard last night; but I don't like fashionable life and its follies, and I hated to think of my sensible Molly being hurt by them. But I have come to think if you want to go so much, child, perhaps it is better that you should, else you may think all your life that your cross, old mamsey has made you miss what you can never make up."

"O, mamsey darling, you're never cross. I *know* you are always thinking of my good, and this—O, mamsey—this is so just and kind of you!"

The mother and daughter kissed each other, and then the happy Molly flew off to commence her little preparations for her visit to lovely Newport and Vio-



MRS. HARWOOD CONSENTS.

let Van Voorst. But, first of all, she must write to her friend that her kind invitation was accepted, and what day and hour she might expect her.

When Miss Violet received this letter she was standing on the lawn of her summer home at Newport, waiting for her pony phaeton, and chatting to a very handsome young girl about her own age.

"A letter for you, Miss Violet," said a groom, doffing his hat as he handed out Molly Harwood's neat little missive.

Violet tore open the envelope and glanced rapidly down the page.

"Oh, she is coming! I was so afraid that she wouldn't," she exclaimed joyfully after this glance.

"Who's coming, if I may ask, Vy?" inquired Miss Margie Dearborn.

"Mary Harwood, a dear girl I knew when I was at Sherwood School. She was a day scholar, and used to walk over from Hollingsford, a distance of three miles, every morning, and back at night."

"Why did she do that? For her health?"

"Because they had no horses or carriages, Miss Margie."

"Oh! I thought all the people who lived in the country had horses, or at least one horse, Vy," commented Miss Margie rather wonderingly.

"All farmers do, I suppose, but Mary Harwood was not a farmer's daughter. Her father was dead, and she and her mother and little brothers lived in a little country town — Hollingsford, three miles from Sherwood. They were not rich people at all. I sometimes used to think they might be quite poor ; but Mary was so nice, the nicest girl in school. I want you to call upon her when she is here, Margie, and be very sweet to her."

Margie nodded her head carelessly, with a pleasant "of course" to her friend's request, and the next moment the two girls were bowling along the avenue in the pretty basket phaeton, Violet holding the reins with a practised hand.

Three hours later, as the Providence boat steamed up to the Newport wharf, Mary Harwood, looking anxiously from the forward deck, saw the basket phaeton and its pretty owner, with the natty little groom in the little back seat — or, properly speaking, *the rumble* of the carriage. All the way in the cars and in the boat, Mary had been anticipating this meeting with her friend with unalloyed pleasure ; now, as she caught sight of the stylish turnout, with the glittering, many-buttoned little groom perched on guard as it were, there flashed over her, involuntarily, all the things her mother had said in regard

to the difference in her life and that of this lovely Miss Violet. One thing specially came to her—almost the last thing her mother had said to her:

“You mustn’t expect, Mary, that a girl situated like Violet Van Voorst will *continue* to feel the interest in you that she does now. You are new and fresh to her just now, but when she is fully launched in the gay world where she belongs, you must make up your mind to lose her.”

When Mrs. Harwood had said this Mary had resolutely refused to believe it, though she spoke not a word to her mother of her rebellious state of mind. But now, in sight of Violet, transformed into such a gay little princess, sitting there as if upon a little throne with her body-guard, her mother’s warning words came back upon her with a cold chill, and not even the princess’ bright face and warm kiss of welcome could quite restore her old feeling of trust and happiness.

And it was this feeling that, like a vague shadow, seemed to be perpetually looking over her shoulder, and clouding the sunshine all through the first days of her visit. In these days her letters to her mother were mostly made up of descriptions of Newport—the cliffs, the glen, the famous old fort, and the rest of the fascinations of the historic old town.

And Mrs. Harwood, reading these letters and observing how little was said of her "dear Violet," and the Van Voorst family, commented to herself in this style, after her critical, suspicious fashion :

"Poor little Molly! it's just as I knew it would be. She's finding out that when fashionable people are in their own world, they don't need simple little folk like her, who have no fine feathers, to reflect credit upon them. It is as well, perhaps, that she should learn this early, but I do hope they won't make her unhappy."

But while Mrs. Harwood was making up her mind to these dismal conclusions, Mary was learning quite another lesson than her mother supposed, and on the third week of her visit, just a week after the third of the series of letters which had convinced Mrs. Harwood that her prophecies were being fulfilled, the good lady was astonished by the receipt of the following :

"DEAR MOTHER: I have waited until now before I said anything about Violet herself and the home-life here, for I wanted to be *certain sure* — as I used to say when I was a little girl — of the reality before I gave my opinion or criticism; for you know you



AT THE VAN VOORSTS'.

were always warning me not to jump at conclusions in my enthusiasm.

“Well now, dear mamsey, I am going to begin at the very beginning and tell you everything. Violet met me as I told you at the boat. But as I have *not* told you, suddenly, when I first caught sight of her sitting in that elegant little phaeton, with the sleek pony all a-glitter in the silver-mounted harness, and the smart groom perched up in the rumble, glittering like the pony, and Violet holding the long white reins in her long, white driving-gloves, it all came over me like a flash what you had said about the difference in our lives as it never had before, and there in the warm sunshine I felt as if a shadow had settled down upon me which would never lift ; for I felt as if you had guessed it all right—that Violet in her own world *could* not care for me as she had in dear old Sherwood, and I should find it out in a thousand ways.

“Even when the dear, pretty creature seized me and kissed me so affectionately a moment afterwards, I couldn’t put aside my misgivings. I kept thinking ‘Oh, if this is only the first glimpse of all the splendor what will the rest be, and what can a girl who lives in fairy-land want of a little plain country-girl like me?’

“Well, up from the boat we drove through the narrowest, queerest old street, right past a house where George Washington had his headquarters a hundred years ago, and crossing through still another narrow, old street we came to Bellevue avenue, and were presently at Violet’s home. I’ve told you before, mamsey, how beautiful it all was, with its velvet lawn, and its piazzas and long windows, and lovely furniture, partly of silk and partly of that exquisite Wakefield rattan manufacture. But I haven’t told you yet how as we went in and Violet’s mother, whom Violet always calls ‘mamma,’ who was just then coming along the hall, stopped and put out her pretty, slim hand to me, and said she was pleased to see me and hoped I had a pleasant journey ; and how *then* she seemed so pleasantly indifferent to me and to Violet, too, as if it was a nice, polite, little speech she might have said to anybody she had never heard of.

“And then directly after we had dinner in a great dining-room, with Florentine mosaics on the wall, and what seemed to me then a crowd of company. It was in reality an aunt and uncle of Violet’s who are staying here, and two other ladies and one gentleman who had been invited for that day. Of course they were all older than Violet and I, and so,

of course, they talked of things that were of interest to themselves and that we didn't know about, or that *I* didn't at least. Well, like a foolish girl, I felt this, because it was so different from Sherwood ways where we girls were all in all ; or at Hollingsford where the young people are of so much consequence. Violet didn't seem to mind it, however, and talked to me in her old way in an undertone.

“ So things went on from day to day, Mrs Van Voorst, who is a very elegant and accomplished woman, going into society and entertaining at her own house not only fashionable but people distinguished in different ways. I don't know what I thought, but I suppose I expected to be taken notice of by these people, just as I used to be at Hollingsford by Dr. Ryder and Professor Roy. But nothing of the kind occurred. They would speak to us pleasantly, now and then, and now and then Violet would chat a little with one of them, but we were really treated a good deal like nice children ; and I, who had been used to ‘speaking up’ to everybody, and giving my opinion upon everything, from Tennyson's poems to the latest theological discussions, and to think it very smart to do so, felt very much astonished that I was of no more importance, and I began to have, by-and-by, a sober feeling that all this

neglect was because of my being a little country girl, with no fine relations and no money.

“During this time several of Violet’s friends had been to see me — young girls like ourselves — but I didn’t feel at ease with them, for the reason that I had been cherishing a suspicious spirit ever since my arrival.

“Well, to come now to the grand point. Last Wednesday, a week ago, Violet gave a lawn party. Stretching back of the house there is a beautiful great lawn, which is in full view of the sea, and on this various pretty tents were put up, croquet hoops set, and all kinds of lovely arrangements. It was a day party, of course, and I wore my white dress with pink ribbons, and rosebuds from the greenhouse which Violet brought to me. Then I took the black velvet off of my white straw hat, and plaited that old white lace scarf that you gave me about the crown, and twisted up the ends with a knot of roses and pink ribbon. Violet was delighted with the effect, and I think, mamsey, I did look very well.

“And I felt pretty well, too, and had a very nice time until Margie Dearborn, Violet’s next-door neighbor here, started a new game or play, which somebody brought from abroad recently, called ‘The Ambassador.’ I won’t explain it in detail

now, but will just say that one has to know something of geography and French to answer the questions and be a successful player. Well, though I can read French quite well you know I can't speak it, and geography is one of my weak points.

“Foolishly enough I had allowed Margie Dearborn, the week before, to think I was a very fine linguist. She had found me reading a French newspaper, and something she said, I've forgotten what, irritated me in my suspicious mood, and I replied, ‘I shouldn't think I knew much if I didn't understand French. It's a great deal easier than the English language,’ which is true, of course, in one way; but Margie thought I meant it in quite a different way — that of being complete mistress of it.

“Well, we went on swimmingly in ‘The Ambassador’ until I had to pay a forfeit. Then I was sent to France as the Spanish ambassador. ‘From what country do you come?’ I was asked. Then, ‘What is the capital?’

“And, O, mamsey! I answered ‘*Granada*.’

“Only think of it; and there was Mrs. Van Voorst and her sister and two or three other ladies looking on.

“The next thing, I was addressed in French and expected to answer in that language. Simple phrases

enough ; for all these girls talk French very readily, because they have had French *bonnes* or nurses, and most of their mothers have French maids, and have lived abroad some time. But I couldn't answer a word, for I couldn't understand them, and forgot what little I did know.

"Oh, mamsey ! I thought I should sink through the ground with mortification as I caught Margie Dearborn's eye, and as I faced all of them so stupidly — I, Violet's friend, of whom she had talked so admiringly, as I knew she had !

"And just then when a great wave of color was blazing into my cheeks, Violet came forward and said softly, 'The Spanish ambassador has not been to France before, and he cannot understand our rapid careless French though he can read it better than we can.'

"And then mamsey — then what do you think Mrs. Van Voorst whom I thought such an indifferent fine lady, did ? — she rose and came forward and said sweetly, 'And I must break up the court at once, and take the Spanish ambassador and all the rest of this fine company to the banquet that is served for them,' and she slid my hand over her arm and smiled down upon me like an angel of goodness. And she took us the whole length of the gar-

den, mamsey, to give time for one of the men to whom she spoke to hurry up the supper — for it wasn't nearly ready, though she had pretended that it was, just out of pure kindness to save me from any further mortification. And when supper was really served in the big tent, all the girls followed her example and were just as pleasant and kind to me as possible.

"Afterwards when I was alone with Violet, I thanked her for her sweetness and told her how much I appreciated her mother's kindness to me, and I confessed to a good deal of my own foolish feeling too. And Violet, mamsey, looked at me in amazement, and said to me, 'Oh, Molly, don't praise me, for trying to retrieve my great blunder.'

"I asked her what she meant, and then she told me that she ought not to have allowed 'The Ambassador' to be played, because she knew that I couldn't *speak* French fluently, but that she forgot for the moment. 'And mamma was so displeased with me,' she went on eagerly — 'she said that she wouldn't have thought I could have been guilty of such a rudeness to my guests, as to allow a game to be played in which they might be mortified.'

"Oh, Mamsey, doesn't this prove how much in the wrong I have been in my suspicious judgments? There are, of course, people in high position who are

not ladies or gentlemen, but the Van Voorsts are not of this kind. They are "real people" Mamsey, who believe in the best things; and it needed just this experience to show me what they were, and to remove the little scales of prejudice from my eyes, that I might see that under all the smooth, elegant surface which I thought lacked our country heartiness, there was really the most delicate courtesy. I thought sharply, the Hollingsford girls would have joked and teased any one, placed as I was — their own fault, partly, too. I can see very plainly that these little ceremonies and fine manners, which at first seemed to keep me at a distance, are really helps oftentimes to the real, polite feeling towards others.

"Mamsey dear, I am coming home to you next week, with not a bit of envy for all this new life, but with a new idea for the old life, for which I shall always be better, as I shall always be your loving
MOLLY."

When Mrs. Harwood came to the end of this long letter, there were tears in her eyes. She spoke softly: "The child is right, she will always be the better for this experience; and so shall I, for I shan't make up my mind quite so hastily again about the 'other side.'"

JIM'S TROUBLES.



"I KNOW he didn't do it," said good Mrs. Martin; "he says he didn't do it, and I believe him."

"Then you don't believe *me*?" asked Mrs. Turner rather severely. "I wish I had never seen that boy! I'm sure

I have done my best by him, and been a mother to him. And now he's turned out bad, everybody blames me for it. Father says, if he has done it, it is my fault for tempting him; Nelly has nearly cried her eyes out about it; and everybody seems to

think it is more wicked to loose a spoon than to steal it—I declare they do.”

“ Well, he’s been a good, honest boy ever since he came here — a real nice, obliging, pleasant spoken little fellow ; and it stands to reason a good boy don’t turn bad all in a jerk like that,” said Mrs. Martin, shaking her head.

“ I don’t know about jerks,” answered Mrs. Turner, “ but I do know that, as soon as I had done cleaning that spoon, I put it back in the case, and as I was a-going to put it away, Jim comes in to get a pail, and says he, ‘ ain’t it a pretty little box ! ’ and says I : ‘ yes, but what’s in it is prettier. ’ Then I smelt my bread a-burning, and I put down the case right here,” said Mrs. Turner striking the corner of her kitchen table, “ and I ran to see to my bread, and when I came back Jim was gone, and my spoon was gone too. And I don’t suppose it walked off itself—do you ? ”

“ Of course it didn’t,” said Mrs. Martin ; “ but some one else might have come in, or it may be somewhere ” —

“ I’d like to know where that somewhere is, then,” said Mrs. Turner ; “ I have looked high and low and turned the house upside-down for a week, and I haven’t seen any spoon yet. And nobody could

come in without my seeing them because the front door was locked and so was the kitchen door, and anybody who came in or went out had to go through



OPINIONS DIFFER RESPECTING JIM.

the back kitchen where I was. I saw Jim go out with his pail, but I didn't suspect anything then — why should I? And it isn't the spoon I mind so much, it's the trouble, and the idea of that boy that had been treated like one of the family — but I won't say anymore about it. I'll send him back to New York, and " —

"No, don't do that! I guess I'll take him," said Mrs. Martin. "He hasn't any home to go to, and if you send him back, there's no telling what will become of him. Where is he?"

"I guess he is sulking about the place somewhere," said Mrs. Turner. "He said he hadn't done it, and now he won't say another word. I'll call him if you really want him."

Mrs. Martin said she really wanted him, and Mrs. Turner, stepping out on the kitchen porch, called out, "Jim, Jim!"

There was no answer, but pretty soon a boy walked across the yard toward the house, and stopped near the porch.

He was a boy about twelve years old, tall of his age and rather thin, and with a round, honest face, which looked very pleasant when he was happy, but which was at that moment very much clouded.

"I'll speak to him by myself, if you don't mind," said Mrs. Martin, shutting the door and seating herself on the porch step.

"Come here, my boy," said she kindly, while her homely face looked almost beautiful with goodness. "I don't believe you are a bad boy; I think it's all a mistake, and it will come out all right some day. I

am going to take you home with me, if you will come."

Jim's brown eyes brightened, but he answered, not very gratefully, "Thank you, but I'd better go away from here—they all believe I took it."

"No, they don't; I don't for one. You had better stay and behave like a good, honest lad, and I'll be a true friend to you. Besides, we mustn't run away from our troubles! you know they are sent to make us good and strong, don't you see, my boy?"

Having finished her little sermon, Mrs. Martin got up and gave Jim a motherly hug and a kiss. And poor Jim "broke down" as he would have called it. But it was a breaking down that did him a world of good, and made a new boy of him.

"There, there," said Mrs. Martin, "now go and get your things, and we will go home."

Jim went up-stairs quietly to the little attic room that had been his own for two years. He made a small bundle of his old clothes. He wouldn't take the new ones. "They was my friends when they got them for me," he said to himself, "but now they ain't my friends any more, and them clothes don't belong to me now."

Jim's grammar was not perfect, but he meant well, and in his heart he was very sorry to leave the

friends who had been so kind to him during two happy years.

As he turned to go down-stairs, he heard a noise in the hall, not far from him, and he saw Nellie Turner who seemed to be waiting for him. "Oh! Jim," she said, and could not say more, because she began to cry.

Poor little Nelly had been breaking her heart about Jim's trouble. She was a nice little girl ten years old, with bright yellow curls, pink cheeks, and blue eyes; but now the pink of her cheeks had run into her eyes, and she did not look as pretty as usual. But Jim thought she was beautiful, and her red eyes were a great comfort to him.

At last he spoke, "Good-by, Nelly; I am going away."

"I know it," said Nelly, "but, Jim, I don't believe you are bad, and you will be good, won't you?"

"Yes, I will," said Jim. Then he left Nelly crying on the stairs, and went quickly to the porch where Mrs. Martin was waiting for him.

"Well, good-by, Jim," said Mrs. Turner. "I hope you'll be a good boy. Remember I have been kind to you."

"Yes'm, thank you," said Jim, rather coldly. He

wanted to see "Father," but Mr. Turner had taken himself out of the way.

While Mrs. Martin was walking home with her little friend, and talking to him to cheer him up, they heard something running after them, and Jim said, "Here is Spot, what shall I do? I am afraid I can't make him go back."

"Well, we'll take him home, too," said Mrs. Martin. "I like dogs, they are such faithful friends; they don't care if people are pretty or ugly, rich or poor, good or bad, they just love them, and stick to them. Yes, we will take Spot, and make him happy."

This remark made two people very happy. Jim brightened up, and laughed; and Spot, who had kept his tail between his legs in a most respectful and entreating manner, now began to wag it joyfully, and showed his love by nearly knocking down Mrs. Martin, to let her know that he understood what she had said, and approved of it.

Spot had been given to Jim by one of his school-mates, and Jim was very proud of his only piece of personal property. Spot was a white dog with a great many black spots all over him, and he was not exactly a beauty, but he was the best, lovingest, naughtiest, and most ridiculous young dog that ever

adorned this world. He was always stealing bones, and old boots and shoes, and burying them in secret places as if they had been treasures, and no one had the heart to scold him much, because he looked so repentant and as if he would never, no never, do it again as long as he lived.

Since the silver spoon had disappeared, Spot had been very unhappy ; people seemed to give him all the benefit of their disturbed tempers. Mrs. Turner spoke crossly to him, and would not let him stay in the kitchen ; Mr. Turner had slyly kicked him several times ; Nelly cried over him when he wanted to play, and Jim only patted his head, and said, " poor Spot, poor Spot ! " by which he meant, " poor Jim, poor Jim ! " But now Spot felt that a good time was coming, and he rejoiced beforehand, like a sensible dog.

And, in truth, a pretty good time did come. Jim was not entirely happy, because he could not prove his innocence, but he found that no one had been told of his supposed guilt.

Mrs. Turner had not said a word about her missing spoon to any one. " I will give him another chance to begin right," she had said to her husband. And Mr. Turner had replied, " I don't believe he took it

any more than I did ; so what's the good of making a fuss about nothing ? ”

No fuss had been made ; but Mrs. Turner had said to her little daughter, when she started for school the morning after Jim's departure, “Nelly, you must be careful not to say a single word to anybody about Jim. But I don't want you to ask him to come here, and it's just as well for you not to play with him much.”

“It is too bad,” said Nelly. But she was an obedient little girl, and the first time Jim came to school, when she saw that he hardly dared to look at her she thought that it would be better to tell him the truth.

So at recess she called him, and asked him to go with her on the road, where no one would hear them ; then she said :

“Jim, I want to tell you something. Mamma told me I must not ask you to come to the farm any more, and that I must not play with you much, and so I won't do it. But I like you just the same, and I will give you an apple every day to say we are friends.”

Nelly was as good as her word. Every morning, at recess, she gave Jim a small red and yellow “lady-apple,” which she had rubbed hard to make it shine,

and which was one of the two apples her father gave her when she went to school ; and the " lady-apples " were all kept for her, because she said they were so good and so pretty — " just like my little girl," Mr. Turner said.

And what do you suppose Jim did with his apples ?

Eat them. No, not he !

Every time Nelly gave him an apple, he put it in his pocket and took it home. Then in the evening before going to bed, he made a hole in it — the apple, not in the bed — and strung it on a piece of twine which hung from a nail in the window-sash in his little room.

The poor apples got brown, and wrinkled, and dry, but they were very precious to Jim, but every one of them said to him, as plain as an apple can speak : " I like you just the same."

And so the winter passed away quietly. Mrs. Martin became very fond of Jim ; she said he was so smart and so handy about the house she didn't know what she would do without him, and she didn't think boys were any trouble at all.

But, alas, how little we know what may happen !

Spring had come, and house-cleaning had come with it. Mrs. Martin had a nice " best-room "



"I LIKE YOU JUST THE SAME! I LIKE YOU JUST THE SAME!"

which she never used except for half an hour on Sunday afternoons during the summer, and which was always as clean as clean can be. But in spring, it had to be made cleaner, if possible; summer could not come till that was done.

So the carpet was taken up, shaken, and put down again, and as Jim had helped in the shaking, Mrs. Martin kindly invited him to come in, and admire the room.

"What a pretty room it is!" said Jim; "why don't you live in it?"

"Because it would wear out the carpet, and it is more comfortable in the sitting-room;" answered Mrs. Martin. Then she showed him a few books, boxes, and other works of art which were spread out on the big round table, and Jim admired everything.

Among Mrs. Martin's treasures, there was a brown morocco "Keepsake," containing a pair of scissors, a silver thimble, and a needle-case. It had belonged to Mrs. Martin's little daughter who had died several years before, and when Mrs. Martin went into the best-room on Sunday afternoons she always opened the "Keepsake," and thought of the little hands that had played with it, long ago. And now as a reward of merit, she showed it to Jim.

"It is the prettiest thing I ever saw!" said Jim;

"when I am rich I will give Nellie Turner one just like it."

"She will have to wait some time, I guess," said Mrs. Martin, laughing.

Then they looked at the pictures of George Washington shaking hands with nobody, and of his wife, looking very sweet and handsome.

"You are so great at stringing up things, Jimmy," said Mrs. Martin with a funny look, "I want you to hang up these pictures for me, will you?"

"I will," said Jim, blushing a little as he thought of his string of apples; "I will do it next Saturday."

Jim kept his promise. The pictures were hung in the best light and made the room look so much prettier, that even Spot, who had been a silent observer, could keep still no longer, and barked his approbation. Then the blinds and windows were closed, the door locked, and the best-room was left to quiet and darkness.

The next day being Sunday, Mrs. Martin paid her usual afternoon visit to the best-room. She admired the pictures a little while, then she went to the round table to take up the Keepsake; but the Keepsake was not there.

She looked all over the table and under it, be-

hind every chair and in every corner, but she did not find it. "I wonder where it can be? Perhaps I took it to the sitting-room without thinking," said Mrs. Martin to herself.

She went back to the sitting-room and looked everywhere, but found no Keepsake. Then she sat down in her rocking-chair and tried to think about something else, but could only say to herself: "I wonder where it is!"

Jim came into the room with a new Sunday-school book, which he began to read. Mrs. Martin looked at him while he read, but for some reason she did not say anything to him about the Keepsake.

The next morning she put off her washing, and as soon as Jim had gone to school she began to search the whole house; but no Keepsake did she find.

"It can't be, it can't be," she said with tears in her eyes; "but I *must* look in his room — perhaps he took it up to look at — he said it was so pretty."

Mrs. Martin went up to Jim's room, but found nothing there except his clothes, the apples, and a few little treasures such as boys have.

Then she fell on her knees by Jim's bed, and cried with all her heart. "No, I won't believe it till I have to," she said at last. "Poor boy; it's hard on him and he has been so good, too! But I must speak

to him about it, and if he has done wrong I must try to be patient with him."

When Jim came home from school in the afternoon, Mrs. Martin called him into the sitting-room. "Come here, Jim," she said; "I want to speak to you."

She had said it very kindly, but there was something in her voice that made Jim feel a little queer.

He came in and stood before her, and she said to him: "Jim do you know what has become of that pretty Keepsake I showed you the other day? I can't find it anywhere, and I have looked and looked."

"No," said Jim boldly, "I haven't seen it since. I hope it isn't lost." Then he stopped, and his face blushed crimson. There was something in Mrs. Martin's eyes, as well as in her voice, that reminded him of his trouble about the silver-spoon.

"Oh! you don't think" — he cried out.

But he could say no more — Mrs. Martin had him in her arms the next moment.

"No, I *don't* think," she said, "I don't, my boy! not for the world I wouldn't! only I can't find it, and — and —"

"Let me look for it," said Jim.

They looked again together, but with no success.

That night there were two heavy hearts in the quiet little house, and the next morning there were two pair of red eyes at the breakfast table.

"You must not grieve so, Jim," said Mrs. Martin. "I hope it will all come out right; we must try to bear it well, and go to work as if nothing had happened."

But she could not follow her own advice, and the washing remained undone.

Jim did not go to school, and spent his time looking everywhere in the orchard and in the garden, while Spot followed him, wondering what was the matter.

No one had any appetite for dinner, and after trying in vain to eat a potato, Jim went up to his room.

Mrs. Martin tried to sit still, and sew, but she could not bear it long; and when she heard the children coming from school, she went to the gate to look at them; they were so happy that it seemed to do her good.

"Is Jimmy sick?" asked little Nelly, stopping on her way.

"No," said Mrs. Martin; "but he's been busy, and couldn't go to school."

Nelly wanted to send him a nice russet apple she

had kept for him, but she did not quite dare to do it because Mrs. Martin looked so sober.

Jim heard her voice from his room, but he did not dare to show himself. "She won't like me just the same when she hears of this," he thought; and he felt as if he had not a friend in the world. "I would give my head to find that thing," he said; "she don't believe I took it, but she believes it too; I shall have to go away from here, and I don't care what becomes of me, anyway."

Mrs. Martin stood at the gate a little while watching the children, then she went to the garden to look at her hot-beds — two large pine boxes in which lettuce, radishes, and tomatoes were doing their best to grow fast and green.

When she came near the beds, she saw Spot stretched on the ground, enjoying an old bone, as she thought.

"This won't do, Spot," she said; "I don't want you to bring your bones here. Go away!"

Spot did not seem to mind her at all, so she came a little nearer to make a personal impression upon him with the toe of her shoe.

Spot growled, and turned away his head a little, and as he did so, a little silver thimble fell out of the old bone and rolled upon the ground.

"My Keepsake!" exclaimed Mrs. Martin. And, as she said afterward, she was so taken by surprise you could have knocked her down with a feather.

She waited half a minute to get her breath when she picked up the thimble and ran toward the house! calling with all her might: "Jim, Jim, here it is, here, come!"

Jim never remembered how he got down-stairs, but there he was staring at the thimble, and so happy that he couldn't even begin to say a word.

Mrs. Martin was just explaining to him: "you see it was 'Spot, and the bone, and the thimble fell out of it, and I knew it was not you" — when they heard a big voice calling from the road: "Jim, Jim, come out here quick!"

They looked round, and saw farmer Turner running as fast as such a fat man could run, and waving something shiny over his head.

"Here it is!" he said, "here is that blessed spoon! I was a-plowing in a corner of the orchard, when I turned up a soft stone made of red morocco. with a silver spoon in it. Didn't I tell you so? I never believed it. Hallo! what's the matter?"

The matter was a most wonderful scramble. Mrs. Turner and little Nelly had run across lots, and here they were, talking, and laughing, and crying. Every-

body hugged everybody else, and everybody was so glad she was so sorry, or so sorry she was so glad — farmer Turner vowed he couldn't tell which it was most.

At last they made out that they were all very glad, and Mrs. Martin invited them all to stay to tea. They accepted the invitation, and such a tea-party never took place anywhere — not even in Boston — for the company had joy as well as hot biscuits, and happiness as well as cake.

Spot was scolded and forgiven, and wagged his tail so hard that it is a wonder it didn't come off.

As for Jim, he got kisses enough that evening to last him for a lifetime.

This is the true end to a true story, but not the last end by any means.

For Jim is now a "boy" twenty-one years old, and Nelly "likes him just the same," only a great deal more.

POLLY'S TEMPTATION.

POLLY BAKER wanted a new doll. She did not go to her father or mother for money and then go to the store and buy one, but she went to the rag-bag and the button-box and her mother's bureau-drawer where she kept the pieces left from her own and Polly's dresses and the boys' clothes, and got together a lot of odds and ends ; and, after sewing all day whenever she had any spare time, by evening she had quite a large rag-doll, with buttons for eyes. It did not look much like a real baby, but any one could see it was meant for a rag-doll. Somehow it did not please Polly as well as her former efforts in that direction had done. The black buttons gave its face a wild, staring expression, and its cheeks and lips, which Polly had stained with pokeberry juice, were rather too startling in effect ; and in short, although Polly had almost emptied the ink-bottle to dye the place where the hair ought to be, and walked nearly a mile to get the pokeberries to make lips and

cheeks, and pricked her little fingers till they were sore, she went to bed that night feeling very much disappointed. It was not any wonder, for Polly had resolved to call her new doll Estella, after a beautiful young lady who was visiting in the neighborhood. This lady was from New York. She had beautiful blue eyes, and long, golden curls. Polly knew she could not imitate the curls with black ink, but she was sadly disappointed in not finding some blue beads in the button-box. Polly keenly felt the contrast between her ideal and the real rag-baby. She certainly expected it to bear some faint resemblance to the beautiful lady.

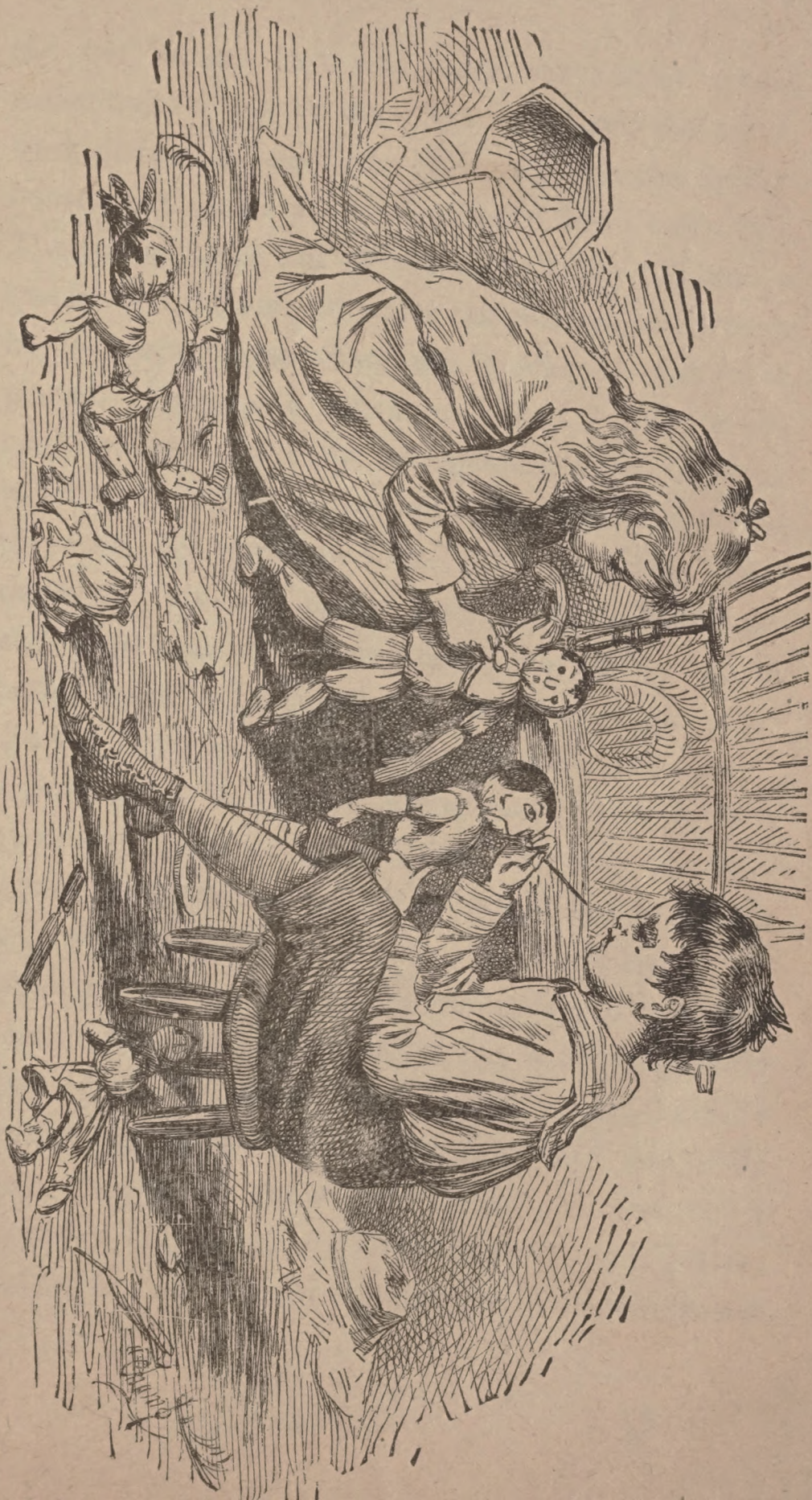
Polly lived in a log-house ; it had a chimney built on the outside after the fashion of Western log-houses. There was a porch on which Polly's father and brothers sat in the evening when the work was done. There were morning-glories clambering all over the porch, and the sunflowers and hollyhocks standing in groups in the yard made the white-washed house, although it was built of logs, look cheerful and home-like. The bake-oven, where Polly's mother baked such wonderfully white loaves of bread, and such delicious pies every Saturday, stood almost in the fence-corner, just leaving enough space for Polly's play-house behind it. Here were Polly's treasures.

There were rag-dolls of all sizes but sameness of feature, for Polly's mother's stock of buttons was not varied, and black ink and pokeberry juice was all the coloring matter Polly was acquainted with. On tiny shelves were pieces of dishes, of common ware, excepting Polly's company dishes, as she called them. Once there was a lovely china pitcher in the family, an heir-loom and a relic of better days. One day the cat jumped up on the table, and down came the beautiful pitcher dashed into fragments, and as Polly sprang to gather them up and carry them to her playhouse, her mother said: "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good." Polly did not know exactly what that meant, but she had a faint idea, and was sure it was a good thing to have some china dishes for her doll's tea-parties. There were chairs and sofas covered with moss that Polly renewed from time to time as it faded; and she thought it looked as much like green velvet as the roses in Miss Estella's bonnet did like real ones. Sometimes Polly got tired of playing alone, and occasionally Benny was good enough to forget he was a boy, and would play kindly with her; but sometimes he was not so amiable, and insisted upon having everything his own way, and then the dolls, instead of being harmless, benevolent ladies, mildly discussing the last apple-butter boiling they

had attended, or the relative beauties of the rising sun and shell pattern of quilts, were bands of hostile Indians starting out on the war-path.

On those sad occasions Polly was obliged to take off their dresses and sew chicken-feathers on the top of their heads, while Benny put on the war-paint which was mud, or wheel-grease, or anything he happened to fancy. One poor, white doll reserved for the purpose, would be bound to a stake, and Polly would be obliged to assist at the imaginary torture, and help Benny to raise the war-whoop. It would be days before Polly could restore her dolls to their former loveliness. She had to cover them with clean muslin, and paint new cheeks and lips; and sometimes the ink would not hold out, and there would be several bald-headed dolls, and for a long time Polly would refrain from asking Benny to play with her.

The little girl woke up the next morning after her unsatisfactory attempt at doll-making, feeling a vague sense of disappointment; at first she could not think what was the matter. The sun was shining and the birds were singing in the apple trees. Pretty soon Polly gave a faint sigh and said softly, "Oh yes, I know!" as she caught a glimpse of the unlucky Estella lying in the corner. She had no time to stop and think much about it for she was the only little



ABOUT TO START ON THE WAR PATH.

girl her mother had, and there was almost always something for her to do. She could set the table, wash dishes, and carry the milk down to the spring-house that stood at the foot of a little steep hill. The spring came out of the side of the hill, and a stream of delicious cold water ran through the trough in the spring-house where the crocks of milk were placed. Polly could churn, and liked it too, for she could stand outside the spring-house door under the willow tree and think over and plan what she would play when her work was done. The dolls were sometimes sick children put to bed and given medicine, and sometimes they were ladies having an apple-butter boiling, or a quilting, or engaged in some other diversion that was fashionable in the neighborhood.

Polly went about her accustomed tasks on this particular morning with a sober face, and the little feet did not move as rapidly as usual; but the sober face grew bright before night, for Polly heard her father tell her mother that he was going to town the next morning with a load of wheat, and if she could spare Polly he would take her with him. Polly's mother replied she would "see about it;" and Polly from experience knew that meant *yes*, and so it proved. The wheat was all loaded the night before, and by sunrise the next morning Polly was enthroned

on the bags of wheat as happy as a queen. Her happiness was completed by being allowed to wear her best dress, although it was completely covered by a clean checked apron.

It was a long ride, and Polly grew very hungry, for she had eaten her lunch of doughnuts in the early part of the day, as she was too much excited to eat her usual breakfast. After a time the journey ended, and Polly was left at the tavern while her father went to the mill to sell his wheat. The dinner, Polly thought, was magnificent, and she did not tire of admiring the red and yellow carpet that adorned the parlor, or the pictures of solemn-looking men who were supposed to be those of the ex-Presidents of the United States. Polly's father came back looking very much pleased, for he had sold his wheat for much more than he expected. He gave Polly twenty-five cents and permission to go to the store and buy whatever she wanted with it. She wondered what she could do with so much money; it seemed a vast fortune, for she never had had more than ten cents before at one time in all her life. There was almost everything to be had in the store, from dry goods and groceries down to candy and toys.

Polly almost held her breath in amazement as her eyes fell on the most beautiful object she had ever

seen. It was a wax doll with pink cheeks, blue eyes, and *truly* hair, as Polly called it. It was gorgeously arrayed in a pink silk dress and lace over-dress. Polly speedily made up her mind what to buy ; twenty five cents she thought would of course buy *any* doll. A boy came up to inquire what she wanted, and Polly asked the price of the doll. The boy replied two dollars. The little girl could not help the tears coming into her eyes, and she falteringly told the boy she thought she could buy it for twenty-five cents.

"You must be from the country," said the boy.

"Yes," said Polly, not knowing the boy meant to make fun of her. "I live sixteen miles from here."

The disappointed face finally touched the boy's heart and he began to take an interest in the little stranger. They consulted over the merits and attractions of various toys, but Polly could not decide ; finally the boy stumbled upon a home question that settled the matter : "Did you ever," asked the boy, "have as much candy as you wanted ?"

Polly was free to confess that the one stick of candy that fell to her share whenever that precious article came into the family, was very far from satisfying her appetite in that direction. "Then I'll tell you what I would do," continued the boy, "I'd spend

it all for candy, and have enough for once in my life." Polly, after a few moments' reflection, concluded to take the boy's advice, so he wrapped a large package of candy, and Polly left the store with a happy heart. She went back to the tavern, and soon her father came and lifted her on the pile of empty bags, and they started home.

After a while Polly found herself in some mysterious way back in the store talking with the boy, and holding the doll in her hands. A woman came in to buy some calico, and while the boy went to the other part of the store to get it for her, Polly crammed the doll in her pocket and stole softly out of the door. She climbed into the wagon and was soon at home. Very soon she began to repent and heartily wish the doll was back in the store. She could not eat much supper, and felt too guilty and ashamed to talk much about her trip, or make satisfactory replies to her brother's eager questions; for the journey to town was of such unfrequent occurrence that whichever child was favored was looked upon for a time as a returned traveller.

Polly rose from her almost untasted supper and sat down in her mother's old creaking rocking-chair and began to rock, and it began to say: "Pol-ly-stole-a dol-ly." Polly stopped rocking; but the clock took

it up and ticked so plainly, "Pol-ly-stole-a-dol-ly," that she was frightened, for she thought all the family would understand it. She hurried out into the yard. The old white rooster flew up on to the fence, flapped his wings and stretched out his neck, and began, "Did you kn-o-o-w-Pol-ly" — Polly picked up a stone and threw it at the rooster with such fatal precision that it cut short the terrible revelation. He tumbled off the fence, and after fluttering around wildly in the grass for a few moments, he gave a gasp, curled up his claws and died.

Polly picked him up and threw him over the fence as far she could among some weeds. She went to her play-house, and tugged at the wax doll to get it out of her pocket. She had just laid it on the sofa when she heard Benny coming whistling along towards the wood-pile. It would never do for him to see it ; there was no peace for her as long as she had that unlucky doll. It began to look disagreeable to her. Its wax cheeks had begun to melt, for Polly had been sitting near the cooking stove ; the curls were dreadfully tangled by being carried so long in her pocket ; and the lace dress was rumpled and torn some. Polly thought it all over and made up her mind : she walked resolutely to the well and threw the wax-doll in. She went back to the house with part of the load off her mind.

Pretty soon her mother asked Benny to go out and draw a bucket of water. It was getting dark and Polly's mother lighted a candle. Benny came back soon—and Polly's heart sank as she saw the ill-fated doll in the bucket of water.

"Mercy on us," exclaimed Polly's mother, "what is this?"

All the family gathered around the dripping dolly that Benny was holding in his hand.

"Polly must know something about this," said her mother.

Oh, how Polly wanted to get up and run out of the house into the woods or the stable, or anywhere where nobody could ever see her again, but she could not stir. She could not speak. She could not even raise her eyes.

Suddenly some one seized her by the arm and began shaking her. "Polly! Polly!" said her father, "wake up. We've got home at last. You've been asleep the past two hours."

Polly opened her eyes; the moon was shining, and she saw her mother and the boys waiting on the porch. She felt in her pocket in a bewildered way; there was nothing there but her pocket-handkerchief, and the package of candy smelt so strongly of pep-

permitted that Polly remembered it was candy and not the wax doll.

Such a happy little girl as she was when she found all the horrible trouble was a dream ! She ate her supper and went out to the play-house and brought the despised Estella to her little bed-room, and after she had said her prayer she added these words :

“Dear Lord I’m so glad I didn’t steal the wax doll ;” and then she went to sleep with a smile on her face and the rag doll clasped fast in her little freckled hands.

A WONDERFUL TRIO.

IN a little stone hut among the mountains lived Gredel and her son Peterkin, and this is how they lived : They kept about a dozen goats ; and all they had to do was to watch them browse, milk them, and make the butter and cheese, which they partly ate and partly sold down in the village, or, rather, exchanged for bread. They were content with bread, butter, and cheese ; and all they thought about was the goats. As for their clothes, it would be impossible to speak of them with patience. They had no ambition, no hope, no thought beyond the day, and no sense of gratitude towards yesterday. So they lived, doing no harm, and effecting little good ; careless of the future, and not honestly proud of anything they had done in the past.

But one day Gredel (who was the widow of a shepherd that had dropped over the edge of a cliff) sat slowly churning the previous day's milk, while Peterkin sat near her, doing nothing at all, thinking

nothing at all, because he had nothing to ponder over, and looking at nothing at all, for the goats were an everyday sight, and they took such capital care of themselves that Peterkin always stared away over their heads.

“Heigho!” suddenly exclaimed Gredel, stopping in her churning; and Peterkin dropped his stick, looked at his mother slowly, and obediently repeated, “Heigho!”

“The sun rises,” said Gredel, “and the sun sets; the day comes, and the day goes; and we were yesterday, and we are to-day, and we shall be for some to-morrows; and that is all, all, all.”

Said Peterkin, “Mother, what is there in the world?”

“Men and women,” repeated the wise parent; “goats, and many other things.”

“But is it the end of life to get up, watch goats, eat and drink, and fall asleep again? Sometimes I wonder what is on the other side of the hill.”

“Who can say what is the end of life?” asked slow-thoughted Gredel. “Are you not happy?”

“Yes. But there is something more.”

“Do you not love me — your mother?”

“Yes. But still I think — think — think.”

“Love is enough,” said Gredel, who had passed

more than half way through life, and was content to rest.

"Then it must be," said Peterkin, "that I want more than enough."

"If so, you must be wicked," remarked Gredel; "for I am at peace in loving you, and you should be content in loving me. What more do you want? You have enough to eat—a warm bed in winter—and your mother who loves you."

Peterkin shook his head.

"It will rain to-night," said Gredel; "and you will be warm while many will be shivering in the wet."

Gredel was quite right; for when the sun had set, and the heavens were all of one dead, sad color, down came the rain, and the inside of the hut looked very warm and comfortable.

Nevertheless, Peterkin still thought of the something beyond the mountain, and wondered what it might be. Had some wise one whispered in his ear, he must have learnt that it was healthy ambition, which helped the world and the worker at the same time.

Soon it began to thunder, and Peterkin lazily opened the wooden shutters to look at the lightning.

By this time Gredel, having thanked Providence for a large bowl of black bread steeped in hot goat's

milk, was nodding and bobbing towards the flaming wood fire.

“Mother, mother! here comes something from this world!”

“And what comes from the world?”

“Something like three aged women, older than you are a very great deal. Let me wait for another flash of lightning. Ha! The first has a big stick; the second has a great pair of round things on her eyes; and the third has a sack on her back, but it is as flat as the palm of my hand, and can have nothing in it.”

“Is there enough bread, and cheese, and milk, and salt in the house?” We must consider.”

“Aye,” answered Peterkin; “there is plenty of each and all.”

“Then let them come in, if they will,” said Gredel. “But they shall knock at the door first, for we go not out on the highways and in the by-ways to help others. Let them come to us—good. But let us not go to them, for they have their business, and we have ours; and so the world goes round!”

“They are near the door,” whispered Peterkin, “and very good old women they look.”

The next moment there was a very soft and civil tapping at the door.

"Who goes there?" asked Peterkin.

"Three honest old women," cried a voice.

"And what do three honest old women want?" called Gredel.

"A bit of bread each," replied the voice, "a mug of milk each, and one corner for all three to sleep in until in the morning up comes the sweet yellow sun."

"Lift up the latch," said Gredel. "Come in. There is bread, there is milk, and a corner laid with three sacks of thistle down. Come in, and welcome."

Then up went the latch, and in stepped the three travellers. Gredel looked at them without moving; but when she saw they were pleasant in appearance — that their eyes were keen in spite of their many wrinkles, and that their smiles were very fresh and pleasant notwithstanding the lines about their mouth, lazy but good-hearted Gredel got up and made a neat little bow of welcome.

"Are you sisters?" she asked.

"We are three sisters," answered the leader, she who carried the stick. "I am commonly called Sister Trot."

"And I," said the second, who wore the spectacles, "am commonly called Sister Pansy."



IN STEPPED THE THREE.

"And I," added the third, who carried the bag, "am styled Sister Satchel."

"Your mother and father must have been a good-looking couple," said Gredel, smiling.

"They were born handsome," quoth Trot, rearing her head proudly, "and they grew handsomer."

"How came they to grow handsomer?" asked Peterkin, who had been standing in a corner.

"Because they were brisk and hurried about," replied Pansy, "and never found the day too long. But pray, sir, who are you?"

"I am Peterkin, son of Gredel."

"And may I ask what you do?" inquired Trot.

"Watch the goats."

"And what do you do when you watch the goats?"

"Look about."

"What do you see when you look about?" asked Sister Pansy.

"The sky, and the earth, and the goats."

"Ah!" said Pansy, "it is very good to look at the sky, and truly wise to look at the earth, while it is clever to keep an eye on the goats; but Peterkin — Peterkin — you do not look far enough!"

"And when you look about," queried Sister Satchel, "what do you pick up?"

"Nothing," said Peterkin.

"Nothing!" echoed the visitor. "What! not even an idea?"

"What is an idea?" asked Peterkin.

"Oh, oh, oh!" said the three sisters. "Here is Peterkin, who not only never picks up an idea, but actually does not know what one is!"

"This comes of not moving about," said Trot.

"Of not looking about," said Pansy.

"And of not picking up something every day," said Satchel. "And a worse example I, for one, never came across."

"Nor I!" "Nor I!" echoed the other sisters.

Whereupon they all looked at Peterkin, and seemed dreadfully serious.

"Why, whatever have I done?" he demanded.

"That's just it!" said the sisters. "*What* have you done?"

"Nothing!" exclaimed Peterkin, quite with the intention of justifying himself. "Nothing at all!"

"Ah!" said Trot, "*that* is the truth, indeed; whatever else may be wrong — done nothing at all!"

"Nothing!" "Nothing!" repeated Satchel and Pansy, in a breath.

"Dear me!" said Peterkin.

Whereupon Gredel, half-frightened herself, and

partly indignant that her boy should be lamented over in this uncalled-for manner, said, "Would you be pleased to take a seat?"

"Certainly!" said Trot. "Still I, for one, would not think of such a thing until your stools were dusted."

Gredel could *not* believe her eyes, for actually Trot raised one end of her stick and it became a brush, with which she dusted three stools.

"I think, too," said Sister Pansy, looking out sharp through her spectacles, "that if we were to stop up that hole in the corner we should have less draught. As a rule, holes are bad things in a house."

So off she went, and stopped up the hole with a handful of dried grass she took from a corner.

"Bless me!" said Satchel; "here are four pins on the floor!"

Whereupon she picked up the pins and popped them into her wallet. Meanwhile Gredel looked on, much astonished at these proceedings.

"I may as well have a rout while I am about it," said Trot, beginning at once to sweep up.

"Cobwebs in every corner!" cried Pansy; and away she went, looking after the walls.

"No wonder you could not find your wooden

spoon," remarked Satchel; "why, here it is, most mysteriously up the chimney!"

There was such a dusting, sweeping, and general cleaning as the place had never seen before.

"This is great fun!" said Peterkin; "but how it makes you sneeze!"

"Here, dame Gredel," cried Satchel; "I have picked up all the things you must have lost for the last three years. Here is your thimble; and now you can take the bit of leather off your finger. Here are your scissors, which will cut cloth better than that knife; and here is the lost leg of the third stool — so that I can now sit down in safety."

"Why," exclaimed Peterkin, "the place looks twice as large as it did, and ten times brighter. Mother, I am glad the ladies have come."

"I am sure, ladies," said the good woman, "I shall never forget your visit."

To tell the truth, however, there was something very ambiguous in Gredel's words.

"There!" said Trot; "and now I can sit down in comfort to my bread and milk."

"And very good bread and milk, too," said Satchel. "I think, sisters, we are quite fortunate to fall upon this goodly cot."

"Yes," remarked Trot, "they are not bad souls,

this Gredel and Peterkin ; but, they sadly want mending. However, they have good hearts, and you know that those who love much are forgiven much ; and indeed I would sooner eat my supper here than in some palaces you and I, sisters, know something about."

"Quite true!" assented the others, "quite true!" And so they went on talking as though they had been in their own house and no one but themselves in the room. Gredel listened with astonishment, and Peterkin with all his ears, too delighted even to be astonished.

"Now this," thought he, "comes of their knowing something of what goes on beyond the Great Hill as far away as I can see."

"Time for bed," suddenly said Dame Trot, who evidently was the leader, "if we are to see the sun rise."

The sisters then made themselves quite comfortable, and tucked up their thistle-down beds and home-spun sheets with perfect good humor.

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Peterkin awoke cheerily, and he was dressed even before the sun appeared. He made the fire, set the table, gave the place a cheerful air, and then opened the door to look after the goats, wondering why he

felt so light and happy. He was soon joined by the three sisters, who made a great to-do with some cold water and their washing.

"Is it good to put your head souse in a pail?" asked Peterkin.

"Try it," replied Dame Trot.

So by this time, quite trusting the old women, he did so, and found his breath gone in a moment. However, he enjoyed breathing all the more when he found his head once more out of the pail, and after Pansy had rubbed him dry with a rough towel, which she took out of Satchel's wallet, he thought he had never experienced such a delightful feeling as then took possession of him. Even since the previous night he felt quite a new being, and alas! he found himself forgetting Gredel — his mother Gredel, who loved him and taught him only to live for to-day.

"And shall I show you down the hill-side?" asked Peterkin, when the three sisters had taken their porridge and were sprucing themselves for departure.

"Yes," said dame Trot, "and glad am I thou hast saved us the trouble of asking thee."

"A good lad," remarked Pansy to Gredel, "but he must look about him."

"Truly," said Satchel. "And, above all, he must pick up everything he comes across, when he can do

so without robbing a neighbor, and he may steal all his neighbor *knows*, without depriving the gentleman of anything."

Then Peterkin, feeling as light as a feather, started off down the hillside, the three old sisters chatting, whispering, and chuckling in a very wonderful manner. So, when they were quite in the valley, Peterkin said, "Please you, I will leave you now, ladies; and many thanks for your coming." Then he very civilly touched his tattered cap, and was turning on his battered heels, when Sister Trot said, "Stop!" and he turned.

"Peterkin," she said, "thou art worth loving and thinking about, and for your kindness to us wanderers we must ask you to keep something in remembrance of our visit. Here, take my wonderful stick and believe in it. You know me as Trot, but grown-up men call me the Fairy Work-o'-Day." Peterkin made his obeisance, and took the stick.

"I will never lose it!" said he.

"You never will," said Trot, "after once you know how to use it."

"Well," said sister Pansy, "I am not to be beaten by my sister, and so here are my spectacles."

"I shall look very funny in them," said Peterkin, eyeing them doubtfully.

"Nay; nobody will see them on your nose as you mark them on mine. The world will observe their wisdom in your eyes, but the wires will be invisible. By-the-by, sister Pansy is only my home-name; men call me Fairy See-far; and so be good."

"As for me," said the third sister, "I am but the younger of the family. I could not be in existence had not my sisters been born into the world. I am going to give you my sack; but take heed, it were better that you had no sack at all than that you should fill it too full; than that you should fling into it all that you see; than that you should pass by on the other side when, your sack being full, another human being, fallen amongst thieves, lies bleeding and wanting help! And now know that, though I am sometimes called Satchel, my name amongst the good people is the Fairy Save-some."

"Good by," suddenly said the three sisters. They smiled, and instantly they were gone — just like *Three Thoughts*.

So he turned his face towards home, with sorrow in his heart as he thought of the three sisters, while hope was mixed with the sadness as he glanced towards the far-off mountain which was called Mons Futura.

Now, Peterkin had never cared to climb hillsides, and, therefore he rarely went down them if he could

help it, always lazily stopping at the top. But now the wonderful stick, as he pressed it upon the ground, seemed to give him a light heart, and a lighter pair of heels, and he danced up the hillside just as though he were holiday-making, soon reaching home.

"See, mother," said Peterkin, "the good women have given me each a present—the one her stick, the second her glasses, and the third her wallet."

"Ho!" said Gredel. "Well, I am not sorry they are gone, for I am afraid they would soon have made you despise your mother. They are very pleasant old people no doubt, but rude and certainly ill-bred, or they would not have put my house to rights."

"But it looked all the better for it."

"It looked very well as it was."

"But the world goes on and on," said Peterkin.

Gredel shook her head. "Humph!" she said, "a stick, an old pair of spectacles, and a sack not worth a dime! When people give gifts, let them be gifts and not cast-offs."

"Anyhow," said Peterkin, "I can tell you that the stick is a good stick, and helps you over the hill famously. I will keep it, and you may have the sack and the spectacles."

"Let us try your spectacles," cried Gredel. "*Oh!*" she said, trying them on carelessly. "These are the

most wonderful spectacles in the world," she went on ;
"but no more civil than those three old women."

"What do you mean, mother?"

"I see you, Peterkin — and a very sad sight, too. Why, you are lazy, careless, unwashed, and stupid ; and a more deplorable object was never seen by honest woman."

Poor Peterkin blushed very much ; but at this point, his mother taking off the glasses, he seized and placed them before his own eyes. "*Oh!*" he exclaimed.

"What now?" asked Gredel in some alarm.

"Now I see you as you are — and a very bad example are you to set before your own son! Why, you are careless, and love me not for myself but yourself, or you would do your best for me, and send me out in the world."

"What? and dare you talk to your mother in such fashion? Give me the spectacles once more!" and she clapped them on again. "Bless me!" she continued, "the boy is quite right, and I see I am selfish, and that I am making him selfish — a very pretty business, indeed! This is to be thought over," she said, laying aside the spectacles.

By this time Peterkin had possessed himself of the stick, and then, to his amazement, he found it had taken the shape of a spade.

"Well," said he, "as here is a spade I think I will turn over the potato-patch." This he did; and coming in to breakfast he was admonished to find how fine the milk tasted. "Mother," said he, "here is a penny I have found in the field."

"Put it in the bag," said Gredel.

He did so, and immediately there was a chink.

Over he turned the sack, and lo! there were ten pennies sprinkled on the table.

"Ho, ho!" said Peterkin, "if, now, the bag increases money after such a pleasant manner, I have but to take out one coin and cast it in again, and soon I shall have a fortune." He did so; but he heard no chinking. He inverted the bag again, and out fell the one coin he had picked up while digging the potato-patch.

"This, now, is very singular," he said; "let me put on the spectacles." This done, "Ha!" he cried "I see now how it is. The money will never grow in the sack, unless one works hard; and then it increases whether one will or not."

Meanwhile Gredel, taking up the stick, it took the shape of a broom, and upon the hint she swept the floor. Next, sitting down before Peterkin's clothes, the stick became a needle, and she stitched away with a will.

So time rolled on. The cottage flourished, and the garden was beautiful. Then a cow was brought home, and it was wonderful how often fresh money changed in the wallet. Gredel had grown handsomer, and so also had Peterkin. But one day it came to pass that Peterkin said: "Mother, it is time I went over the great hill."

"What! canst thou leave me?"

"Thou didst leave thy father and mother."

Gredel was wiser than she had been, and so she quietly said: "Let us put on the spectacles. "Ah! I see," she then said, "a mother may love her son, but she must not stand in his way as he goes on in the world, or she becomes his enemy."

Then Peterkin put on the spectacles. "Ah! I see," said he, "a son may love his mother, but his love must not interfere with his duty to other men. The glasses say that every man should try and leave the world something the better for his coming; that many fail and but few succeed, yet that all must strive."

"So be it," said Gredel. "Go forth into the world, my son, and leave me hopeful here alone."

"The glasses say that the sense of duty done is the greatest happiness in the world," said Peterkin. Then Gredel looked again through the glasses.

"I see," said she; "the glasses say it is better to

have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. Go forth into the world, my son; we shall both be the happier for having done our duty."

So out into the world went Peterkin.

What else is there to tell? Why, who can write of to-morrow?

By the way, you should know that amongst the very wise folk sister Trot is known as "Industry," sister Pansy as "Foresight," while honest Satchel is generally called "Economy."

PRYING LIZZIE.

AH, what a sigh was that, coming from *such a* little mite of a girl! One would think she must be a grandmother in miniature, and had seen and suffered a heap of affliction in her earlier days. She tosses a pile of books aside — have *they* anything to do with her trouble? — and, throwing her arms forward on the table in a very sprawling fashion, she raises her blue eyes half crossly, half timidly, towards a pair of spectacles which seem to be glaring sternly at her from the other side of the table, and says:

“Auntie!”

“Yes, my dear,” say the spectacles, sharply.

Lizzie turns round towards the open window, through which the leaves and the trees and a beautiful blue patch of sky are visible, and the brisk little breeze is wafting the sweet odor of flowers, and her round little browned face pouts and wriggles itself very queerly as she mumbles:

“Mayn’t I finish this history lesson after tea? It’s so very hard!”

The spectacles glitter and glance for a moment, up, down and about, and then they say, as they bend down again on the stitching:

“Little girls must not pro-cras-tin-ate! We shall finish the history now, my dear, if you please. Go up-stairs to my bed-room, where you’ll be quieter, and I’ll come up in half an hour to hear you recite.”

The bed-room! where it is so silent, and the window looks out on nothing in particular except a stack of firewood. But Lizzie obeys on the instant; for she knows her stately but kind aunt too well to offer any show of hesitation.

On her way across the top landing she passes the forbidden room — the room in which her aunt keeps her “wallyables,” as the Irish servant calls them, and where is enshrined the wonderful rosewood box whose contents are such a mystery to Lizzie. For I regret to say that Lizzie, good little girl as she is otherwise, is one of the most curious and inquisitive of mortals.

She pauses for a moment on the threshold of the half-open door, with her finger in her mouth and her eyes staring keenly into the room. Ha! the blinds have not been drawn. The warm sunlight is pouring

into the room, and it will damage the rich carpet. Should she call her aunt, or should she go in herself and darken the room ! It can be done in a second. She will go in, and touch nothing. She skips across the floor, trembling just a little, and softly lets fall the curtains of the window facing the sun. On turning round to go back, her eyes fall on the wonderful box, with its embossed silver plating, resting on the table at the farthest corner. She would *so* much like to feel the exquisite tracery with her hands — to read the delicately lined inscription on the side — just for a moment ! She will not stay, not she ! nor attempt to open it, though — “well, I *do* wonder what *can* be inside of it ! Not letters, surely. It is too heavy for that !” She is over and actually seated before it, before she knows what she has done.

“How handsome the lid is ! And this — ”

Her heart jumped into her mouth. She had jerked out a tiny drawer and instantly pushed it in again. She sank back in the cosey chair, with her heart going pit-a-pat in her throat for a little while. Soon, however, she felt better ; and, clasping her little hands closely together in her dress to keep them from rambling any farther, she began to examine the writing and figures on the silver, with her nose almost rubbing against the box.

"That flower!" she whispered to herself in rapture. "O, that beautiful bird of Paradise! Those pretty, darling, laughing Cupids! O dear, dear, dear! I wonder if I shall ever have a box like this all to myself! What splendid things there must be inside of it—gold and diamonds and rubies, perhaps!"

And she lounges back in the great chair once more, wondering and thinking and guessing and dreaming, while the history book drops neglected on the floor.

She sat there, it might have been an hour, it might have been only a few minutes, when—she couldn't tell exactly how it happened, hardly *what* happened. She thought she must have touched one of the Cupids—when, all at once, the heavy lid flew open with a loud bang, and such a terrible looking little man bounced out on the table and pointed fiercely at her with his finger. His nose was almost as long as himself, and that was about four inches. He was dressed in a suit of yellow silk, and his eyes pierced through and through her like needles.

"What! what! what are you doing there?" he exclaimed. "How came you there? What have you got in your hand?"

Terribly frightened, Lizzie could only answer in a whisper, "Nothing!"



THE INHABITANT OF THE ROSEWOOD BOX.

“Nothing! What’s that?” said the fierce little man, with a savage stamp of his foot. “Who are you? Where do you come from? How old are you? What

you looking at? What are you thinking about?"

Lizzie rose to leave the room ; but, all at once, her feet became heavy, and could hardly be made to step at all. The air, too, seemed to grow thick, which made breathing extremely difficult. She had not reached the door when the little man — after screaming, "Where are you going?" — tapped with his knuckles on the end of the box, and, O dreadful! out there rushed scores and scores of vicious-looking creatures like himself. They jumped on the floor, crowded round her feet, tugged at her skirts, and, finally, three or four of them got up among her hair and began to tousle it unmercifully. And all the while they kept up a hideous screeching of innumerable questions, not one of which did they give her time to answer.

Lizzie tried to cry out, but, as soon as she opened her mouth, they pinched her in the arm and neck. She then opened the door and walked into her aunt's bed-room ; but they followed her in hundreds, screaming and yelling and pinching her.

"Why! whatever have I done?" she moaned.

"That's just it!" said one of the creatures.

"What have you done?" "What have you done?"

"What are you doing?" "What will you do?"

The questions went round from one to another.

"O, where has everybody gone!" she cried, looking into the different rooms and finding no one. She put her hand in her pocket for her handkerchief, for she was beginning to cry; but she quickly drew it back again with a cry of pain. They were in her pocket, rummaging among her letters, and munching some candy she had tied up in her handkerchief.

"Where did you get this?" they shouted. "Who sent you this letter? Who sewed on this pocket?" And the questions were echoed by a countless multitude of tiny creatures, who crowded about, hopping over her feet and arms and neck.

Quite bewildered and desperate she threw herself down on the nearest chair. Just then one little fellow, stouter and more ferocious-looking than the others, jumped on her shoulders screaming into her ear:

"Ain't you Paul Pry's sister?"

"Paul Pry's sister!" "Paul Pry's sister!" "Paul Pry's sister!" was echoed from one to another.

"Yes, take her!" "Punish, pinch, torment!"

"O, O, O, O, O!" screamed Lizzie, as she felt their terrible long nails in her flesh all over her body.

Suddenly, "Hush!" "Hush!" "Here she comes!" she heard some of the voices say.

"Who?" "Who comes?" "Who?" "Who?"

"Who?" cried hundreds of voices.

“Why, who but Paul Pry’s sister’s aunt!”

“The aunt of the little wretch of a girl who wants to see everything!”

“Who wants to know everything!”

“To hear everything!”

“Good! good! *We’ll* pay her before her aunt comes! *We’ll* cure her! *We’ll* make her want to know about what doesn’t concern her. *We’ll* fix her!”

“Silence!” cried the stoutest little creature, with a pompous face, and in a voice loud enough to come from a steam-whistle. “Silence, all of you! I wish to speak. Child, you have come to the abode of Inquisitive Thoughts. We increase at a fearful rate. Every girl adds to our numbers. Millions-billions are added every year. You never thought of this?”

“No — I — never — did!” sobbed Lizzie.

“Don’t be a baby. All this would never happen and we would have plenty of room, if it were not for curious little girls like you, who won’t mind your own business. Think of the girls all over the earth and of all the curious thoughts that will be born before a hundred years from now. We shall be suffocated. There are too many of us now. Don’t think we mean to let you off. Your punishment is coming.”

“Hasn’t it come yet?” she asked, weeping.

“Faugh, that was only fun! Your punishment

will be to swallow as many of us as belongs to you — and that's a lot ! ”

He turned towards the multitude and waved his arm.

“ Paul Pry's sister's children will please come up here and settle on her lap.”

Here they come — one, two, three, four, five — how many more ? Will they never come to an end ? Forty, sixty, a hundred — and still they come ! At last, as her arms and her lap are full of them, she sees the last creature in the procession just coming out of the box, and — lo and behold ! — he is bearing on his shoulders her history book. Presently, as the pile is up to her neck, the last man jumps up, dashes down the book on her head, and saying :

“ Paul Pry's sister
Had a pretty nose,
Just the sort of thing to tweak —
So, here goes ! ”

He gives her poor nose a tremendous wrench, as she thought. She screams aloud in her terror, and —

“ Why, bless me, my child ! what is the matter with you ? I declare ! your face is all wet. Did I hurt you, darling ? ” said her aunt, caressingly ; for it was she who had gently pulled her nose in order to waken her. And O ! such a shout of joy as Lizzie gave upon finding herself unhurt, with a nose on her

face, and no one about but her dear aunt, who would be sure to forgive her when she should tell her all she had suffered, and how good she meant to be.

And, indeed, her aunt had reason to congratulate herself afterward, that, ever since that strange mid-summer day's dream had come upon her, Lizzie had ceased to be the vulgar, inquisitive, prying little thing that she had once been.

ONLY FIFTEEN.

THAT was a rather cruel, unfeeling remark of Mr. Earle to his daughter Sadie, or Sarah as she now wished to be called, because, "at least, she wasn't a baby!"

"No, sis, you're neither a little girl nor a woman ; but just between hay and grass, as one may say."

Sarah gave an extra push to her already well tied-back muslin overskirt, and started for school with a smouldering spark in her eye.

"It's true what father says," she soliloquized as she walked along. "I'm too old to wear my dresses short, and too young to wear them long ; too old to let my hair go loose and comfortable, and too young for frizzles, puffs and coils. And as the cows in the spring, when the hay is gone and the grass not well-grown, have to put up with odds and ends, so I have to take all Hat's and Jen's cast-off dresses and hats ; or, if there is anything awfully unbecoming to them

I get *that*, whether I like it or not. Then in the work, what I have is just what everybody else hates to do, like washing dishes and cleaning lamps—just what nobody gets credit for either, only blame for not doing well.”

By this time this ambitious girl of ours had reached the school-house; but the teacher had an engagement, so the card attached to the door-handle told the scholars. Sarah started at once to retrace her steps; for it was a two-mile walk, with only here and there a few old apple-trees to shield her from the sun's glare.

As she walked, her thoughts reverted to the morning's conversation, partly, perhaps, because the scent of new-mown hay greeted her. Like any girl of her age it struck her as a queer, backward sort of comparison to speak of childhood as the time of hay.

“O, yes!” she exclaimed aloud as a thought struck her, “I see how it is!” and she at once resolved to write the coming week's composition on that very subject.

“I'll say,” she soliloquized, “that childhood is cared for by the garnered love of father and mother. That's the hay, you see! But, at last, the youth goes out into the world and gathers love for himself. And I shall give it a *moral* turn; for, somehow, I think

young people *ought not* to be selfish, even if I am so — but ought to gather love by loving.

“What’s the use of talking, though? If *I* really wanted to be useful I couldn’t. Who’d ask me to sit up and watch with sick people, for instance? I couldn’t even keep awake all night. I wish I could be sure I’d be the right sort of woman, and then, seems to me, it might be beautiful to be wrinkled or gray; for, by that time, one is sure of one’s self.”

Then she suddenly stepped down from her mount of moral enthusiasm — a feat, alas! so easily accomplished, so hard to account for, often.

“*Before* I get to be good and gray, I’d like some nice times and some nice things. This muslin overskirt and waist are pretty enough and for once, *new*, but — why — what! —”

She sprang quickly out of the road in sudden terror, for she thought a loose horse was plunging furiously down the road **behind** her. She had not scrambled half-way up the steep bank before he came in sight, but, to her relief, he was not riderless. Squire Wait’s boy reined him in with difficulty, just within view, and, turning in his saddle, shouted at the top of his voice, evidently to some one in a neighboring field:

“If Doctor Ainslie ain’t to home, what’ll I do?”

Sarah could not hear the reply ; but the boy appeared satisfied, for he quickly settled himself in the saddle, applied his whip to the horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

Sarah hurried up the bank and looked over the stone on its top. At no great distance she saw a man lying on the ground, and three others standing by him. In a moment she saw who it was, and, as she ran towards the group, she guessed the truth, which was, that Squire Wait himself had received, at the hands of one of his blundering workmen, a severe cut in the leg from a scythe while mowing.

The bright arterial blood was pouring from the wound, a deathlike pallor had overspread the sufferer's face, and his eyes were already half-closed.

Sarah whisked the muslin overskirt over her head like a flash.

"Help me tear a broad bandage out of this!" she cried.

The men were dull-looking plodding laborers ; but one of them seemed encouraged by her air of determination and, in a moment, from the back of the skirt a breadth was torn. Without any words Sarah tied a strong knot in this breadth. Then she stooped down, and, with one great heart-sinking, one cry of the flesh against the spirit, she lifted the rent

garment from the gaping wound to see just where it was ; then she pressed the knot just *above* the wound with all her strength.

"John," said she, steadily, "tie this bandage under the leg, and one of you others go as quick as you can for a stout short stick."

The blood, already affected in its flow by her pressure, oozed more slowly from the wound. The stick was brought in a trice, and slipped under the bandage where John had tied it in a "hard knot."

"Now, John," said Sarah, calmly, "twist the stick till you tighten the bandage so the blood shall stop altogether."

By the time this was done poor **Mrs.** Wait, trembling and terrified, arrived on the scene with a little old-fashioned pocket bottle of smelling salts, and a cruet of vinegar wherewith to bathe her husband's head. These restoratives answered well enough till the doctor arrived.

"You're a right sensible girl!" said the doctor, when he heard what Sarah had done. "Anyone of you fellows," continued he, "could have stopped the blood, or mostly stopped it, by pressing the limb above the wound with your fingers till help could be got."

Next morning Sarah stopped at the squire's gate



SARAH COMES TO THE RESCUE.

to learn how he was. John was spreading hay in a field close by, and he came out to the road to speak to her.

“I say,” he said, contemplating her slight form

with genuine admiration, "such a little creeter as you be to ha' ben so knowin' and so smart! Why, you can't be more'n fourteen or fifteen at the outside."

"Only fifteen," answered Sarah, with a queer little smile. "Just between hay and grass."

"I never did see the beat!" responded John. "How'd you know so well what to dew? that's what I'd like to know!"

"O! I learned it at school," answered Sarah, with a little air of patronage and humility combined. "You see, John, the blood that comes straight from the heart is bright red, and comes in jets as the heart beats; didn't you notice that?"

"Yes! yes! I see his life was beatin' away, but nothin' we could dew wouldn't suit him; and, fact! there didn't seem to be nothin' we could dew."

"Well," continued she, finding his wandering thoughts had come home again, "when the blood comes that way and is bright red like that, you must do something *at once*. You must put your force on a knot as I did, between the wound and the heart. And, while a knotted bandage is getting ready, you ought to hold the limb *up high* as you can. That will check the blood. I forgot that at the time."

"I *never did* see the beat!" repeated John, his limited vocabulary allowing no more elegant phrase-

ology in which to express his wonder and esteem.

Sarah was moving on when John called after her.

"Say, sis, it's a shame! but those numb-heads went to work and tore that pooty muslin thing of yours all to bits, thinkin' 'cause you asked for one bandage you'd want twenty more. Mis's Wait was dretful sorry. Said ef there'd been enough left for an apron 'twouldn't 'a 'ben so bad."

Sarah laughed and went on, smoothing down a dusty alpaca overskirt — an old one of Jenny's cut down.

A few days after, the Earle family were all in the kitchen at supper, when there came a knock at the front door. Hattie rose and went to the door. She returned directly with a package in her hand, reading on the outside wrapper in a rather disgusted tone as she walked in:

"To the little girl who learns her lessons at school so well."

"Susie, of course," said Sarah with a lofty air; for Hattie had looked at *her*, while Susie was aged six.

"I don't know why it mayn't mean you, too," retorted Hattie. "It *looks* like Squire Wait's hand, though a little shaky."

Sarah had half a mind not to take the proffered bundle. As she took off the newspaper wrapper she

saw a note, slipped under the string of a brown paper parcel from some city store, as was evident by the advertisement. The note was directed to "Miss Sarah Earle," and read as follows :

"Dear Sarah : I was dredful sorry you lost your overskert and the squire was, too, and said you shouldn't lose nothing by it. So I went up to the city, and went round and round till I was tired to deth, and my head was all of a daze. Finerlly, I went into the nicest looking store and the one recer-mended the highest, and was showed to the proper clerk for such things, and I says to him, in a despair-ing way, I expect : 'Show me the genteelest, hand-somest, and most sootable dress for a young lady of fifteen years.' He asked was you dark or bland ?

"Says I, 'Middling, with a rosy cheek and a bright eye, and such a look as you might gess a girl to have that tore her brand new overskirt all to bits to stop my husband from bleeding to deth.' I can tell you, fokes near by was intrested to here all about it ; and one gentleman giv me the book you find inclosed, with his respects. The end of it all was, that the head one of the store came up and sold me the dress very reasonable, and leave to change if you don't like it, and likeways put in the piece of muslin for a

school overskert, as near like yours as I could see, free.

"With my earnest hopes that you will be as good a woman as girl I remain, your obedient servant,

"M. E. Wait."

Sarah had read the note aloud at the eager request of the family; but it had been hard work for her, and she now burst into tears and was running off without even looking at her treasures, when her father called out, cheerily:

"Come, Sadie, let's see what the squire's wife bought for you! I allays thought she was a close woman, and I *guess* it's a pink calico."

"How *can* you, father!" asked Sarah, indignantly. But she did dry her eyes, nevertheless.

There was a chorus of "O's!" and "Splendids!!" when a piece of silvery summer silk was unrolled.

"Enough," said Hattie, "for a *whole* suit; and you deserve it, Sadie, and I'm *real* glad of it."

"That's organdy muslin and very nice," remarked Jenny, as the muslin came into view.

The book proved to be a pocket edition of Whittier. She said softly, as she took it in her hand:

"That's the best of all, because I can keep it always."

On the fly-leaf was written :

“Miss Sarah Earle.

“A token of admiration for her noble conduct,
John Brewster.”

It was from one she never knew, nor was likely to see ; yet it was all the more delightful to think that, to one person in the world, she would always seem “noble.” Her soul thrilled at the thought.

As she rose to carry away her precious bundles her father spoke far more gently than was his wont :

“The *best of all*, I think, is, that *you* did it without thought of reward.”

LILY ON THE PLAINS.

LILY'S father is an officer in the United States Army who, for many years, has lived in the Far West—that wonderful country where the sun blazes down upon miles of barren prairie, undulating to the horizon as if it were a great heaving sea, the little hillocks rising like dark waves upon its surface.

Over these vast plains rove the Indians, hunting antelopes, wolves, etc. At these times the “red man” looks his best ; mounted on his swift pony, his gaudy blanket and bright feathers gleaming in the sunshine, his long black hair streaming in the wind, he seems truly the “noble savage.”

But other errands sometimes call out the Indian braves. They go forth on the war-path, their bodies painted jet-black, their faces streaked in frightful fashion, green, red and yellow ; horrible objects they are if you chance to meet them returning from a successful fight, the bravest warrior riding at the head of



LILY. (*From photograph.*)

the party, carrying a long pole to which are fastened the still bleeding scalps which have been taken from their enemies.

It is to control these savages that soldiers are

needed on the plains, to prevent war-parties from dashing into little frontier villages, stealing horses and cattle, burning barns and houses, and murdering the people who are trying to cultivate the prairies, to turn the great plains of dry burnt grass into fields of wheat and beautiful green meadows.

All Indians are not wicked; but the tribe near which Lily's father was stationed was extremely wild and cruel, and refused to live on friendly terms with white people.

When Lily was a baby she was so feeble and sickly that she was left with her grandmamma to be taken care of; but by the time she was a fat jolly girl about five years old, her papa thought it was very hard to be so long separated from his little daughter, so her mamma (who had been at home on a visit) determined to take her out to the plains.

Lily's nurse, who had always taken care of her, said she could not let her darling go without her amongst those "horrid savages;" so one bright morning Lily, and her mamma, and her nurse Jane, and Lily's two darling dollies, "Rosie" and "George," bade good-by to grandmamma and grandpapa with tears and kisses, and set off on their long journey of two thousand miles.

For several days and nights they travelled in rail-

road cars ; and every night Lily undressed Rosie and George (she had brought their night-clothes in her mamma's shawl-strap) and put them to bed in the upper berth, and she and Jane went to sleep in the lower one, and mamma slept just across the aisle in another section. An old gentleman from California was very much interested in Rosie and George, and in the morning he began to talk to Lily about her children. Such naughty children they were too ! bumping and bobbing about on the velvet seats, quite refusing to sit still, until, at last, they fell right out into the aisle and nearly tripped up the conductor when he came round to look at the tickets.

Lily fairly cried, her children were so troublesome. But then the old gentleman called her to his seat and gave her a beautiful bunch of white grapes, and told her about the wonderful land where he lived ; about the great trees, so large that a dozen people with joined hands would scarcely reach around their trunks ; about the earthquakes, when the ground trembled and houses fell down, and people ran out into the streets to escape being crushed ; and about pears and peaches as large as Lily's own head, and strawberries so big that four of them made a saucer-full.

But just as Lily was going to ask her friend to tell her some more wonders, she saw her mamma and

Jane fastening up the bags and shawl-straps, and in a few moments the train stopped and a tall gentleman with a military cap came in and kissed mamma, and said :

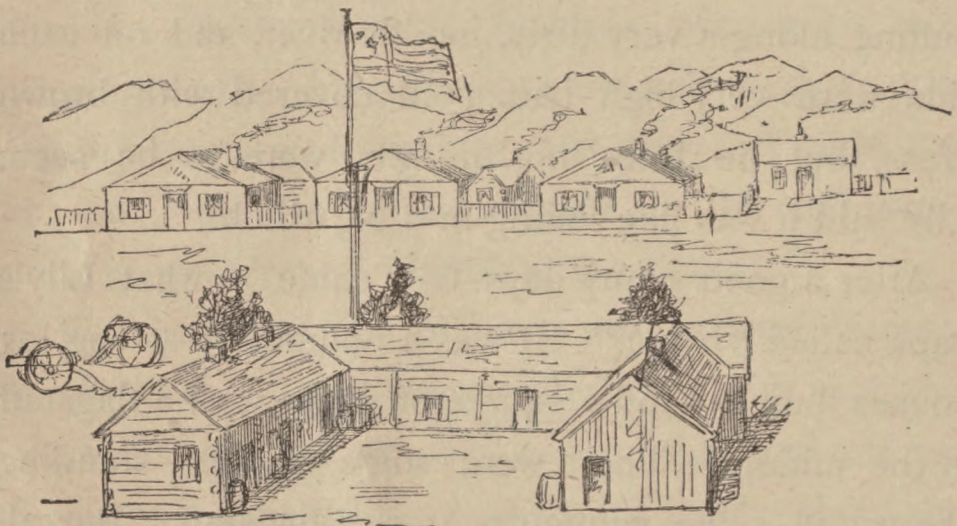
“Has my Lily come at last?” and picked Lily up in his arms and carried her down some steep steps and right on board of a little steamboat.

When Lily waked up next morning the boat was puffing along a very dirty, muddy river, and on each side were very high banks all covered with brown grass, but no trees nor flowers were to be seen. Lily said it was like sailing in a big ditch.

After a good many days they came to what Lily's papa called “home.” It was a number of strong log houses built round a square of grass with a flagstaff in the middle. There were some soldiers standing about and some cannon near the flagstaff. But although the officers and their wives were very glad to see Lily and her mamma, and gave them a kind welcome, they felt very disconsolate ; and when they got into their own little hut of four tiny rooms, with only thick brown paper tacked up over the rough logs, Lily thought of her room at grandmamma's, with its little bed and pretty chairs and window-curtains, and she cried with homesickness ; and, if the truth was known, mamma and Jane shed a few tears also.

But there was no time for tears next day, between unpacking trunks and settling the little brown-paper home, and getting used to the strange sights and sounds of the Indian camp close by the garrison, where twenty-five hundred Indians lived, not more than a hundred yards away.

All day and all night the "tom-tom," or big drum,



THE FORT.

was being beaten by the Indians ; for the time I am telling you of was just after that dreadful battle, when the great Indian Chief, Sitting Bull, killed brave General Custer and half of his noble regiment of cavalry. This success had made all the other Indians very fierce and restless, and in the small garrisons the soldiers were kept day and night ready for attack.

But Lily did not trouble herself about danger. She was not allowed to go out of the garrison enclosure, but she played with her chickens and with her little pony which her father had bought and trained for her. Its name was "Tecumseh Sherman," after the General of the Army, but Lily called it "Tic" for short. It soon followed her in and out of the house and wherever she went, and showed a most decided liking for anything of a red color. When Lily wore a red dress "Tic" would take a fold in his mouth and pull her about, and even knock her down in his play, for he never meant to hurt her. In the evening Lily's little side-saddle was put on "Tic," and she would gallop away over the prairie with her papa.

One morning Lily rushed into the house calling out:

"Mamma, mamma, here's a circus! Come and see! It's right outside the door!"

Mamma jumped up so quickly she nearly upset her sewing-machine, she was in such a hurry to get to the door; and there, sure enough, just outside the garrison was a great crowd of gaily-dressed people, and near the front were six girls mounted on ponies, their saddles beautifully embroidered with beads, and fine large umbrellas over their heads made of red, white and blue cloth. These were princesses, daughters of

the great chief of the tribe. Lily ever after talked of them as the "six Pocahontases."

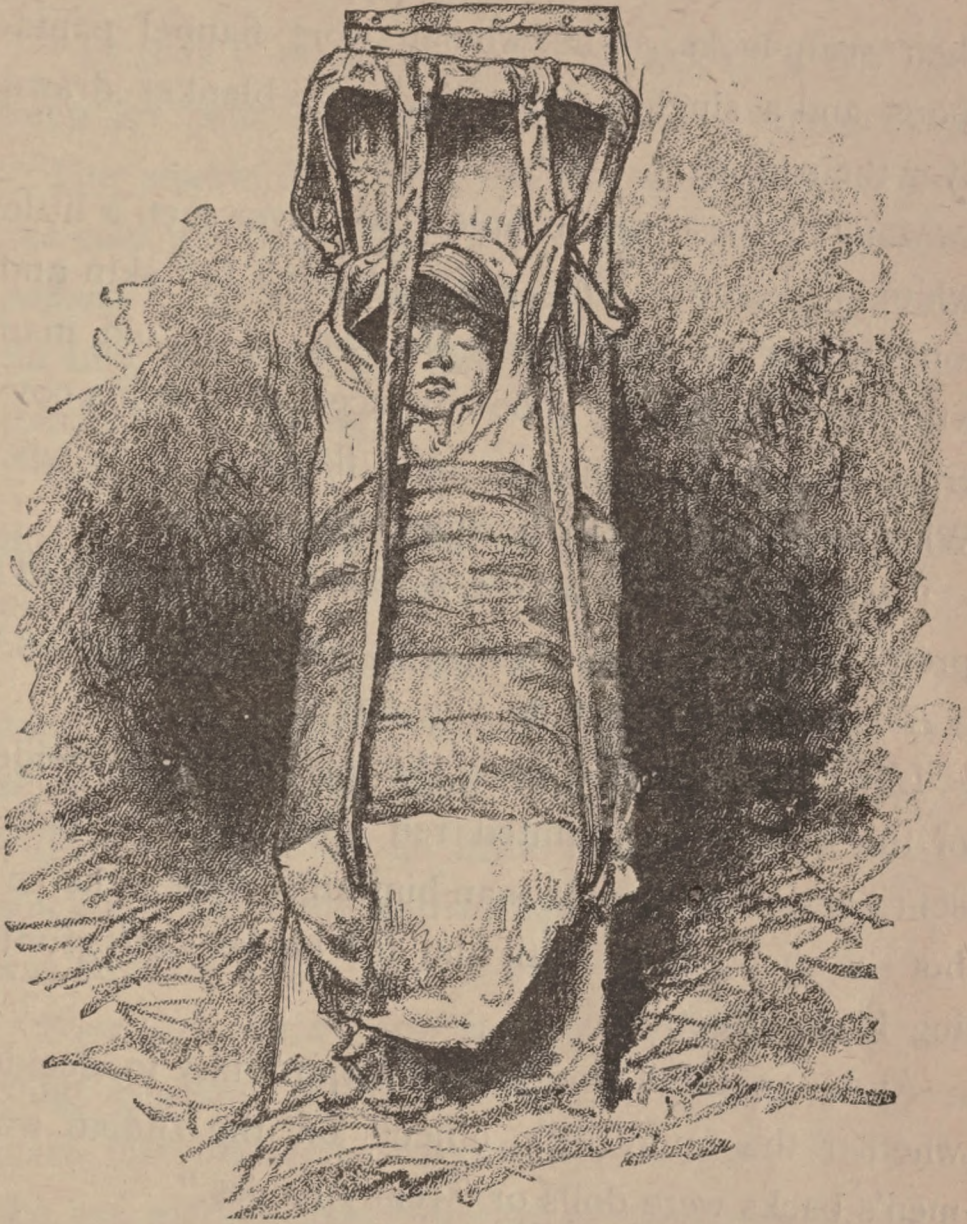
"This is 'Annuity Day,' Lily," said her father. "Get your hat and we will go and see the Indians get their clothes and provisions for the next year."

"What is 'Annuity?'" asked Lily. "Is it Indian for birth-day?"

"Well, yes, it is a sort of birth-day; for the United States' Government gives a good many presents that day to the Indians—food and clothes for the men, women and children, for a whole year."

"Well, let's go," said Lily; "and I'll just touch one of those papooses with my own hand, if I get near enough. I think they are just dolls. No real, live baby would stay quiet tied on a board and fastened up all in a bunch to its mother's back. They do wink their eyes, that's certain; but I can make my Rosy wink her eyes, too, only I have to pull a wire to get her to shut 'em."

So off started Lily with her papa, and soon they came to an open space, in the centre of which was a great pile of blankets, clothing, bacon, flour, corn, coffee, sugar, tobacco, and many other things which good Uncle Sam gives once a year to his "wards," the Indians. Around this pile of things sat a large circle of Indians, men, women and children. The



INDIAN PAPOOSE.

men were, as a general rule, well-dressed in tight leggings, with strips of gay bead-embroidery down the sides ; deer-skin or calico shirts fringed with tiny bells and tassels of colored worsted, and bright feathers in

their scalp-locks. The women wore flannel pantaloons and a single calico slip, and a blanket drawn over their heads.

Many of these wild people had never seen a little white girl before. They gazed at Lily's fair skin and long bright hair with great interest. One old man wrapped in a buffalo robe advanced, waving his covering like some immense bird flapping its wings. When he got near Lily he stood still, saying:

"*Washta papoose! washta papoose!*" (Pretty child! pretty child!) and held out his hand, saying: '*Howe-howe?*' (How do you do?)

Lily quite trembled when she saw that the inside of the buffalo was painted red and yellow to represent flames, and the old man himself looked so fierce but she shook hands with him and he went off grunting his satisfaction.

And now Lily found a good opportunity to decide whether the funny little objects on the Indian women's backs were dolls or "really babies."

While the Indian Agent and his clerks were busily distributing the "Annuities," giving to the Chief of each band the allowance for himself and his family, Lily went up very close to a squaw who had a black-eyed bundle tied upon her back, and stood for several minutes absorbed in contemplation.

"Is that a real, live baby, ma'am, or a doll you keep for your little girl?" asked Lily, very politely.

The squaw, of course, did not understand a word she said, and only responded: "*Ugh! Howe! Washta papoose!*" as a general expression of her good will. So Lily, presently, put out her hand very softly and touched the bundle.

What a scream! Even the dignified chiefs turned their plumed heads to find out what the cause of the noise could be.

There was the papoose shrieking on its mother's back, proving most positively its claim to be considered a "real, live baby," and there was a drop of bright-red blood on its little brown arm. Lily had stuck a pin into the Indian baby just to find out if it was alive or not.

Poor little girl! She stood frightened and trembling, crimson blushes on her cheeks, and two great tears just brimming over from her eyes. Not until she had made a peace-offering of candy to the baby, and left it contentedly sucking away at a peppermint-stick, could she be consoled and interested once more in the strange scene around her.

At last the crowd all rushed to the "corral," where the cattle were penned up. The Indian men mounted the fence and began shooting the steers, which were

to be given to them as beef, amid wild yells and unearthly cries. When the animals were killed the squaws hurried into the "corral," skinned them, cut out the tongues, and carried the beef away to the camp. All that night the "tom-tom" beat louder than ever, great fires were built in the camp, and feasts and dances kept the Indians astir until daylight dawned again.

One night, when Lily was tucked away fast asleep in her little trundle-bed, and her mamma and papa were reading in their sitting-room, Jane came to say that a soldier wished to speak to Captain Morton. In a few minutes the captain returned looking very grave.

"My dear," he said to his wife, "we are going to have some trouble to-night, I am afraid. You know two Indians are in prison here for committing a murder. This soldier tells me their friends in the camp have determined to rescue them before morning; for, at daylight, the prisoners are to be sent to Fort L—, where they will be punished. We must not show we are afraid; but each officer will barricade his house, and defend himself and his family as well as he can, and the men must do what they can for themselves. Thirty white men cannot fight against twenty-five hundred Indians."

“O, my Lily!” murmured Mrs. Morton. “This is bad enough for us; but why did we bring our innocent darling to such a dreadful place, to be torn to pieces by savages!”

But she was a brave little woman after all, and in a minute or two she called Jane, who was trembling and crying in the kitchen, and they all began dragging mattresses off the beds and piling them against the windows, and pushing trunks against the doors; for Indians dread to go into a white man’s house, and a slight obstacle will keep them out. Then Mrs. Morton took Lily up and laid her on the big bed, and put her own fur cloak ready to wrap around the little girl if there should be a chance to get away; and then she sat down on one side of the bed, with a pistol on a chair near her, and a rifle in her hand, and a belt of cartridges in her lap, and Captain Morton sat on the other side, nearer the window, with his pistols and rifle, and Jane lay at the foot of the bed with her arm around her darling Lily.

And so they waited.

It seemed as though it never would be light enough to see to row the prisoners over the wide river, so full of snags and sand-bars that it could not be crossed in the night. Once on the opposite shore,

they and their little guard of brave "boys in blue" could travel swiftly and safely down the railroad to Fort L—. The whole country on one side of the river belonged to the Indians ; but the other bank was settled thinly by white people, and on that side travelling was comparatively safe, for Indians were not permitted to have canoes or boats with which to cross the stream.

I must explain to you also what the little garrison, threatened in the darkness, would not know, that the Indians who were so determined to rescue their friends were only the young men of the tribe. The older warriors and the chiefs knew that if they attempted to take away the prisoners from the soldiers, their "Great Father in Washington," as they called the President of the United States, would hear of it and would punish them, and when ration-day came round next time there would be no coffee and bacon and blankets for any of the tribe, and for many months they would be cold and hungry ; for wild game, which Indians used to hunt, is rapidly disappearing from the prairies. But the young warriors were obstinate, and would not listen to the warning of the old men.

Suddenly, through the dead silence rose, sharp and clear, a savage yell from the dusky crowd. Hoofs pattered quickly over the ground ; wheels rattled ; the

long roll of the drum sounded ; the bang-bang of rifles fired from the windows of the quarters where soldiers were ambushed was clearing the parade. The savages rushed after the wagon which was carrying the captives the few hundred yards to the boat-landing, and were suddenly met by the sight of the Gatling gun, a dreadful sight ; for they had watched it at a distance a few days before, and had seen a couple of soldiers pour a shower of shot and shell, *rap-rap-rap-rap*, into the hillside, only by turning a little handle. The appearance of this, to them invincible weapon, daunted even the young warriors ; they fled back to their camp, where they were received with bitter reproaches.

As for Lily, she opened her eyes and was frightened at the noise. But soon the little brown-paper house was being put to rights again, and breakfast was ready ; and after breakfast Lily was quite busy dressing up her dear Rosie and George with some bits of shell necklaces and metal armlets, and scraps of red and blue cloth which she found out-of-doors, sole relics of that dreadful night of suspense and terror.

Later in the day a group of old Chiefs came to Captain Morton's door. They sat in a semi-circle on the ground. Captain Morton stood in his door-way, and

Lily and her mamma sat down to watch the "Council;" for this was an important occasion. The Chiefs had come to make peace for their young men, and beg they might not be punished for their disturbance of the night before.



SPOTTED TAIL, WIFE AND DAUGHTER. (*From photograph.*)

The oldest Chief of all, who wore a white rag tied over his head like a night-cap, solemnly lighted a very big pipe, smoked a few whiffs and handed it to Captain Morton; he also smoked a moment and passed it to a chief on his other side. And so the pipe went

all round the circle ; for it was the "Pipe of Peace," and must be smoked by all in the Council to show their friendly intentions before a word could be spoken.

Finally the old gentleman in the night-cap stood up and made a long speech, which was repeated in English to Captain Morton by an interpreter. Then another Chief arose, and another, and another, until all had spoken, and they all said very much the same thing. They were sorry for the way the young warriors had acted, and they knew "the Great Father in Washington" was right to take bad Indians and put them in prison, and they hoped the whole tribe would not be punished for the fault of the young men. As each Chief sat down the whole circle grunted "*Ugh, ugh!*" to show they approved of what he said.

One very tall, large Indian, with his face elegantly painted with green and yellow stripes, was sitting close to Lily. She was a little afraid to be near him at first, but her papa had told her she must sit quite still, so she forgot her neighbor after a while ; but, at the end of one speech, he was so pleased with what had been said that he gave a great "*Ugh!*" and leaped up from the ground. Poor Lily was fright

ened half to death. She shrieked and then hid her face, scarlet with shame, in her mamma's lap.

When she shyly looked around again, the "green Indian," as she always called him, though his real name was "Little Crow," was smiling pleasantly at her ; at last he stroked her long, bright hair, and even put his brown hand on Rosie's yellow curls, for Lily had of course brought her dear dolly to the Council. At last the "green Indian " offered Lily a beautiful eagle's wing, the feathers tied together with blue and yellow cloth. These wings are very highly valued by the Indians, and form a part of their costume at all seasons. In the summer they use them as fans.

After a time Captain Morton told the Chiefs the tribe would not be punished this time, but that they must make their young braves keep quiet or they would get into great trouble and have no more food given the tribe ; and then, as is always necessary after a Council, sugar, coffee and loaves of bread were brought out, and portions given to each Chief, in token that the white men were friends again.

NUMBER NINE.

GIVE it to me this minute! it's mine!" said Lulu.

"Tisn't either yours. I found it my very own self!" said May.

"You didn't!"

"I did!"

"I just wish you would go away off, May Stone, so't I'd never see you any more, never, never, so I do!"

"And I wish *you* was in the skies, and could never, never, *never* come down again, you hateful thing!"

Twin sisters they were, in the parlors of a hotel at Long Branch, disputing over the possession of a curious sea-shell.

A gray-haired old gentleman, who had been an attentive observer of this little scene, now called the

little girls to his side, and inquired, " My dears, were you ever ' Number Nine ' ? "

" Ah ! " continued he with a bright smile, " I see you don't understand me. Well, *I* was ' Number Nine ' once, and considered it a most grievous misfortune, too. Yes, I was ' Number Nine ' ; that is, there were eight stout, ruddy, rollicking boys in the family circle when I, with my little bald pate and toothless gums, made my appearance to swell the number to nine ; and, although I had a bona-fide, genuine name — the charming one of Aminadab — I was most frequently styled simply ' Number Nine. ' Now, I didn't fancy being the last of a long line of boys ; and I'll tell you why. In the first place, I was forced to master Arithmetic through mammoth grease-spots, reminders of my eight brothers' cold lunches ; Geography from under great blots of ink ; and spelling with the serious draw-backs of here and there a letter or word missing. Secondly, in addition to the worn-out books of my eight brothers, I fell heir to their cast-off clothing as well. Again, I was obliged to yield the easy-chairs and many other coveted pleasures to the older lads ; and to run upon errands for them until my feet would ache, my blood boil, and my tongue be almost — never quite — up to the point of asserting a new Declaration of Independence. Again, father,

being very systematic, very orderly, invariably served us at table according to our ages, commencing at the eldest, never on any account skipping one in favor of a younger, hungrier stomach, and it would appear to me, sometimes, that my turn would never, never come. No, I didn't enjoy being 'Number Nine.'



A MOST SINGULAR-LOOKING VEHICLE.

“One summer a comet of unusual brilliancy and length of tail flashed into the heavens, exciting great interest and curiosity in many minds, and in none more than in mine, for in my small way I was exceedingly fond of astronomy ; and so, when an announcement appeared in our village paper that on a certain evening there would be an opportunity of viewing the

wondrous comet through a telescope, I was all eagerness and excitement. But we could not all go ; and, as usual, I was the one to stay behind. And I felt very bitterly over it, I can tell you. Next afternoon I was lying on the shady side of a freshly stacked hay-mow, idly listening to the merry chirping of the crickets in the grass, and the lazy hum of bees, but brooding over my trials and tribulations, as I styled them.

“ Suddenly a man stood before me with the startling inquiry, ‘ Would you like to visit the comet ? ’

“ ‘ Follow me, then,’ continued the stranger without waiting for the eager assent which I was about to give ; and he led me out into the road where was standing a most singular-looking vehicle, formed somewhat like a car, but with a pipe emitting volumes of smoke in front, and with great black wings similar to those of a bird, on either side. Into this queer machine my conductor lifted me. He sprang to the seat at my side ; the steam went puff ! puff ! the wings flapped leisurely ; and gently, slowly, almost imperceptibly, we rose into the air to the height of the hay-stack near which I had but just now been lying. Further into airy space we ascended until our old farm-house appeared but as the tiniest of cottages, and the village church a very insignificant edifice in-

deed. Higher! higher! The horses at work in the fields, the cattle browsing on the hills, the wagons standing before the barn, seemed like toys with which children play; the people like ants as they moved about on their several ways; and the winding stream like a silver strand as it stretched on and on. Higher! faster! trees, houses, rocks, hills, blending into one confused mass as we passed beyond the clouds and looked down upon the lightning and the rain. On we flew through the light air towards that great, round, fiery ball, in the center of which, formed by a galaxy of bright stars, I could distinctly trace a large figure '9.' On! with the speed of the wind! The large figure had broken into thousands, millions of little 9's, sparkling, shimmering, dazzling. On! on! the bottom of the vehicle grated upon the pebbly road; the man in charge placed me upon the ground; the strange machine once more rose into the air, and I was left alone.

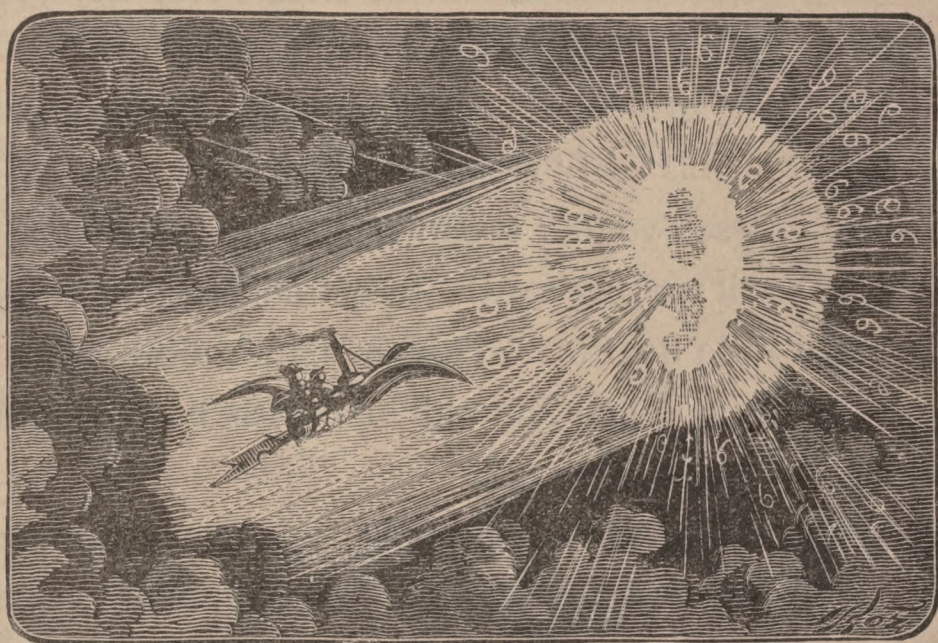
"After a moment's bewilderment I looked about me, and was amazed, delighted, at the scene which met my gaze. There was on one side a great forest, filled with mammoth elms, maples, oaks, taller much than our tallest poplars, whose foliage, shining, luxuriant, was of the most delicate blue, like earth's summer sky; carpeted with a soft, rich, velvety grass and

moss of a similar tint to that of the silver-lined leaves ; and everywhere walked or flew wonderful birds, of rare size, gorgeous plumage and matchless voice. On the other side extended a vast field of nodding flowers, through which flowed a stream clear as crystal and filled with fish of shining gold. Above stretched a sky of the faintest pink with here and there the daintiest of dainty white clouds.

“I was charmed, entranced ; but it was not until I had grown somewhat accustomed to the novel scene that I observed one remarkable peculiarity of the place — that everything bore some reference to the figure ‘9.’ The giant trees of whatever sort or description were trained to form it ; every blade of grass, every leaf, every flower, bore it somewhere upon its surface ; the crystal stream traced it in its wanderings ; the shining leaves as they rustled to and fro in the balmy air, sighed it ; the brook babbled it ; the crickets chirped it ; the insects hummed it ; the birds, each in its own tone, warbled it ; and a solemn old owl hooted in stated measure, ‘*Num-ber Ni-ine ! Num-ber Ni-ine !*’

“However, I did not speculate long upon this strange phenomenon. Happy, delighted, I rambled on until I came to a high stone wall, through one of the openings of which I saw a great city, whose tall,

massive buildings were constructed of solid stone, and along whose broad streets men and women of giant stature were hurrying to and fro, all wearing fantastic caps from which depended nine tiny little bells which tinkled and jingled with a soft, silvery sound at every motion.



"ON WE FLEW—ÓN, ON!"

"Of course I entered the city, and I was immediately met by a huge monster who was bigger than any two of the tallest men I ever saw. I turned to run, but It detained me by an immense hand, and then, strange to say, spoke to me in a kind, reassuring tone. It asked me a great many questions and examined me curiously. When it said 'Come home

with me,' I knew, someway, that it was the Comet King. Immediately we stood before a palace built of polished, blue-gray marble, surmounted by cupolas, turrets, domes of the finest cut-glass, and ornamented all along its smooth beauteous sides by rows of stained glass windows.

"I was eager to enter, but It said, 'No, no, you must wait until your eight brothers have been in.'

"I turned away and burst into tears of vexation and rage. I was still 'Number Nine.'

"'Do you see yonder broad river?' It asked.

"I did see it rushing madly, tumultuously along, and also saw a little boat tossed about on its rolling waves, rowed by a single man, an old man with bowed form and silvery locks.

"'Well,' It said, 'I am sorry for you, Number Nine. I will have one of your brothers, whichever one you may designate, rowed to the opposite shore, where it is eternal night and wilderness. He can never return, and thus you will have at least one less to wait for.'

"Delighted, I dried my tears, and ceased my sobbing. And now, which boy should I select? I started to my feet and paced the square in front of the palace door with knit brow and clenched hands ;

but all to no purpose. I could not make the selection.

“ ‘ Well, which one, “ Number Nine ” ? ’ asked It.

“ But somehow, the more I tried to make haste, the less haste I made. Which of my many brothers, indeed, would I be willing to spare forever from out my home and life? Certainly not Will or Jimmie, my willing assistants in study; not John, who so many times undertook my tasks in addition to his own in order that I might have the more leisure for play; not George or Henry, who were ever ready to mend my battered sleds and toys; not, surely, Bob, merry, light-hearted Bob; and by all means not Ed or Joey, my dear play-fellows and companions.

“ ‘ I am waiting,’ politely said It.

“ Oh, dear! I could not make a decision; and, besides, I was beginning to feel a faint impression that I did not wish any one of the eight sent away, after all. At last I hinted as much to my companion.

“ ‘ Pooh!’ said It very impolitely. ‘ Nobody could blame you. If you wait for eight, when will you get in — think of it! I would dispose of one of them.’

“ ‘ No!’ I cried in terror. ‘ My own, own brothers — never! No, if I *never* enter the wonderful palace!’

“ ‘ I see I must take the matter into my own

hands,' said It, turning from me; and to my terror I saw him signal the old boatman.

"I seized the mighty arm — I cried out — but the great hand only patted my head. 'Foolish little "Number Nine" !' It said.

"I wrung my hands, I sobbed aloud, threw myself



JOEY, BLOWING THE DINNER-HORN.

upon the ground with a hammering in my brain, a choking in my throat, and a heavy weight of anguish at my heart.

"Suddenly a mighty clock, the clock of Doom, clanged out: 1! 2! 3! 4! 5! 6! 7! 8! 9!

"I opened my eyes with a start, and there stood Joey blowing the dinner-horn close at my ears.

“ ‘I guess you have been asleep,’ ‘Number Nine!’ ” he cried merrily.

“ I don’t suppose Joey ever knew what prompted the energetic hug with which I jumped at him, nor the boys the cause of my unusually kind and affectionate manner for a few days ; but *I* knew, and I never forgot.”

The little girls slid quietly down from the old gentleman’s lap while he was wiping away his tears, and walked away without a word. But out under the currant bushes their little arms stole around each other’s waists ; their lips met in a loving kiss ; and Lulu said earnestly :

“ You may have the shell, sister, and I don’t want you to go away one bit.”

And Mary replied quite as earnestly, “ And if you *was* taken up to the skies, I would be *so* sorry ! ”

THE SECRET OF THE TREES.

WHO would have thought those solemn trees in the dark old forest had a secret, folding it closer in their great staunch hearts season by season with new layers of bark, and keeping it safely so many years, till Echen found it out?

Perhaps the birds knew, or the squirrels ; or the wild beasts listening in the dead of night could interpret the rustling of the leaves as they softly whispered the secret over.

Had any human beings heard, they would have said it was only the wind sighing among the leaves ; and the trees would have laughed, and shook their wise old branches, and said :

“ O, you mortals ! the time has not yet come for you to know our speech. All nature is ringing with voices you cannot understand. How you would open

your eyes if you knew the secrets we talk about every day ! ”

Echen found out one of those secrets, and that in a very strange way.

She had been sick for a long time, and her mother said :

“ O, if we could only send our Echen home to the Vaterland, where she could see the dear, big grandmother spinning yarn and making cheese, and the dear little grandfather burning charcoal fires in the forest, she would be sure to get well. There is no place like the Vaterland ; ” and tears rolled down Frau Offermeyer’s cheeks as she thought of her childhood’s home in the Odenwald which she had left to come to America when she married Carlow Offermeyer.

She had had a hard struggle since then with poverty and sickness ; and her heart ached bitterly as she watched Echen growing thinner and paler day by day, and feared it would not be long before she laid her beside her three other little children in their graves in this strange land. So she thought day and night about how she could send her to the dear home country where the roses would bloom on her cheeks, and she would grow strong and well.

One day Carlow came home and said he had found

a man and his wife who were going to the Vaterland. They lived in the Odenwald, many miles from Frau Offermeyer's home ; but their hearts were large and tender, and when they heard of the sick child they offered to take her to her grandmother, even if they did have to go out of their way ; for they, too, said there was no air like that of the Odenwald for making sick people well, with its fresh mountain breezes, and the aromatic fragrance of its forest trees.

Carlow and his wife felt much encouraged as they gave up their pale child into the loving hands of their country-people, though their hearts ached that they could not go too ; but it took all their money to pay Echen's passage, and get her a few comforts for the voyage.

So Echen got safely to the dear big grandmother ; and she thought she had never seen any woman so large and tall as she.

She wore high wooden shoes, and a short blue and white checked woollen dress, with a snow-white kerchief pinned about her broad shoulders. Her face was round and rosy, and beaming like the full moon, and so full of love and tenderness that the little frail child nestled close in her strong arms, feeling she had found a safe resting-place after the stormy voyage.

And the dear little grandfather! He was certainly the smallest man she ever saw. His head reached no higher than the grandmother's shoulders, and was as white as snow. His face was brown and wrinkled as a nut, and his cheeks hard and rosy like a frost-bitten apple. His eyes were blue like Echen's own mother's; so he found a place immediately in the little maiden's heart; and though he did not talk much there was always a mute sympathy between him and Echen.

He would stand beside her bed,—for she had to lie many days before the air of the Odenwald made her well and strong,—and stroke her head, or pat her hand, while sometimes tears would roll down from his gentle blue eyes over his rosy cheeks, when Echen knew he was thinking of her mother, and grieving because he was poor and not able to send her money to bring her to her old home.

Then she would feel sad, and cry, too, and the dear big grandmother would come in, and say in her cheery tones:

“We must not waste our time in fretting, Hans. We must trust in the Lord, and he will provide a way to send our Rita to us when he sees best.”

Then the dear little grandfather would smile, press Echen's hand, and trot off to his charcoal fires; while

the grandmother would sit beside the little girl with her knitting in her hands, and tell her stories about her mother when she was a little girl — how she used to play and dance and sing in the forest with her companions, and swing on the branches of the great trees, and have picnic-parties under their broad shadows.

Echen had always lived in a crowded city, and she loved to hear about the forest trees. When she sat up in bed she could see their tops waving and glistening in the sunshine, and she longed for the time when she would be able to wander through their green and fragrant depths.

But she **did** not fret. She was very good and patient ; if she had not been she would not have found out the secret of the trees.

There was one of these stories that had a wonderful fascination for her. It happened twenty-five years before, and she always felt she was hearing of something away back in the middle ages, that seemed such a very long time ago.

It was about a diamond necklace that Frau Hornbeck — that was Echen's grandmother — had once owned.

There was a sick man, a stranger who came to the door one stormy winter night begging for food and shelter.

The good grandmother took him in and nursed him tenderly ; but her loving care could not save him ; the fever which had settled upon him was doomed to take away his life.

The night he died he called her to his side, and, unfastening a string from his neck, to which was attached a little silken bag, gave it to her, telling her to sell it, and it would make her rich and repay her for all her kindness to him.

When she opened the bag she found in it a glittering diamond necklace, and she was afraid to take it ; but the sick man told her he had come by it honestly, and was on his way to Heidelberg to sell it when the fever overtook him, and he had to beg for shelter at her door.

He was too weak to talk any more ; and he died that same night.

The grandmother hid the necklace away in a drawer, and almost forgot about it, for the dear little grandfather took the fever from the stranger, and was very sick many days.

Now there was a man — Fritz Gomer, by name — whom Frau Hornbeck hired to cut wood, and shovel snow, and do the work the poor sick grandfather used to do ; and about that time there was danger of a war between Germany and one of the other great nations of Europe, and Fritz had to join the army,

for his name was on the draft-roll, and he had no choice but to go and fight the enemy.

After he had gone, and the grandfather began to get better, the grandmother bethought herself of the diamond necklace, and went to get it. But when she looked in the drawer where she had put it, it was gone ; and she knew Fritz Gomer must have taken it, for no one else had been there.

She blamed herself for carelessness in leaving it where he could find it ; but she was a simple, honest woman, and did not dream Fritz would have such a bad, wicked heart as to take what did not belong to him.

However, it was gone ; and there was no help for it.

Fritz Gomer was killed in battle soon after ; and Frau Hornbeck comforted herself by thinking the good God did not think best for them to be rich, or he would not have let the necklace be stolen.

This was the story she told over and over to Echen as she sat knitting by her bedside ; and the little girl always thought with a sigh :

“O, if we only had that necklace now, we could sell it and get money enough to bring my dear father and mother here.”

The room where Echen lay was small, and the walls were white and bare. There was a large fire-place

made of red and black tiles, and the hearth-stone was a slab from the quarry, ornamented at the edge with diamond-shaped red and black tiles.

In this curious fire-place the dear big grandmother would make a little fire towards evening, so Echen would not feel the chilly mountain air.

After the long, quiet afternoon, when the little girl had been eagerly drinking in those delightful stories, she would bring in several shovelfuls of live coals and lay them on the open hearth, and pile on the top of them a great armful of branches which were drying in the shed, and leave them to burn and crackle while she made tea ready for the dear little grandfather, who would be sure to come home cold and hungry.

Then it was — when the evening shadows were drawing about the Odenwald, and the bright flame of the fire threw strange, fantastic, wavering shadows on the white walls of her room — that Echen found out the wonderful secret.

As she lay on her high four-posted bed, her little form almost lost in the huge, billowy feather-bed, she watched those flickering shadows as they danced merrily up and down, forming themselves into all kinds of queer shapes, and chasing each other so rapidly that her eyes could scarcely follow them.

When the fagots on the hearth — having burned

through — would suddenly snap apart, and tumble into a new position on the coals, the scenes on the walls would change, and a new set of shapes and figures dance before her.

Gradually Echen fancied that these quivering shadows — which at first had seemed only irregular and meaningless — took decided forms and shapes.

Those straight lines with the wavering masses above were the forest trees, bending their leafy branches to the breeze.

Between them, here and there, could be seen what looked like stumps, where the mighty monarch of the forest had fallen beneath the woodman's axe.

Then there were figures moving up and down among the trees; little men with axes on their shoulders would stride along the narrow paths, or chop vigorously at the trees till they fell, with a tremendous wavering and fluttering of their branches — but no sound. All was still as death as these pictures formed themselves before Echen's eyes. All that could be heard was the crackling of the dry boughs on the hearth, and the gurgling of the pitch as it was driven forth by the heat.

Sometimes tiny children ran under the trees, stooping now and then as if to pick a flower, or flying high in the air on a swing fastened to a strong branch.



THE SECRET OF THE TREES.

Sometimes a table seemed to be laid in an opening, while around it gathered a crowd of men, women, and children, who seemed to enjoy their out-of-door feast, and danced merrily in a ring afterwards.

Echen could not help associating these pictures with the stories her grandmother had been telling her about her mother's early life — how she played in the forest, and had picnic-parties under the branches with her companions ; and they were doubly interesting to her that she could thus link them with thoughts of that dear mother for whom her little heart was often very sore and homesick.

There was one picture she could not make out ; and it puzzled her greatly.

All the others came to be as clear and distinct as any landscape painted by the hand of man, but this one seemed a blurred and meaningless tangle. It came every day, just the same, and just about the same time — that was when the wood was nearly burned out, and the room was beginning to grow dim, when the last flashes of light from the dying embers were playing hazily over the walls, and the charred sticks were dropping down on the hearth.

One night when she had watched it intently with the same result as ever before, her grandmother came in with a fresh armful of wood.

“The grandfather is late,” she said ; “and these will make the room cheerful while I bake a hot cake for his tea ; for the wind is rising, and he will be cold and hungry after his long walk.”

She piled the wood upon the hearth, kissed Echen and went out.

The fire made a great hissing and crackling as it caught the dead leaves hanging on the branches ; then the hot flame blazed up, and soon the whole mass was on fire, wavering and gleaming and throwing forth those same old pictures on the wall.

Suddenly a shower of sparks flew out into the room ; and, instead of dying away in a few seconds, as they always had before, they danced about as if they had life.

Why, what were they ?

Echen sat up in bed and opened her big, blue eyes to their widest extent.

The tiny creatures — for such they seemed, settled on the posts of her bed, on the coverlet, on the pillow, while one daring little fellow alighted upon her hand.

They were all alike, with brown, scaly bodies like the trunk of a tree, wings that rustled like the leaves and eyes flaming like coals of fire.

The one on Echen’s hand, saw she looked frightened,

and, hopping off on the bed beside her, spoke in a voice that sounded like the gurgling of sap in spring-time.

“O, wise Echen ; good Echen ; we are the spirits of the burning trees. You have read, and read aright, the pictures we have shown — all but one. O, study that deeply, for in it lies the key to more than you think.

“When we were growing in the forest we watched the scenes that were daily enacted about us ; they were all indelibly impressed upon our hearts, they grew into us, never to be effaced, never to be worn away, bound about with fresh fibres every year, and strengthened and preserved by the life-giving juices that flow through our frames. But when we are burning, and our life is ebbing away, as our bark unrolls and the sap oozes out, we throw forth, in the flickering lights and shades that come from our dying breath, the shadows of those scenes we have witnessed.

“Everyone cannot understand them ; only because you have been good and patient, Echen, has been granted to you the power to read our hand-writing on the wall. Study carefully that other picture, for great good will result if you interpret it aright.”

The spirits of the burning trees were gone ; and

Echen rubbed her eyes, and wondered if she had been dreaming.

The wood had nearly burned away ; the embers were dropping upon the hearth, and the shadows on the wall taking those indistinct shapes that had so often puzzled her.

She lay down now, and watched them quietly, patiently, for a long time, gazing as intently and earnestly as if her very life depended upon it.

After a while the confused, irregular jumble did seem to form itself into something like trees — those trees that were in every picture she saw.

There was one very strange-looking tree, with a gnarled trunk and crooked branches, and leaning sideways as if blown over by a storm.

When she had made this out distinctly, she saw, creeping under the shadow of the other trees, the picture of a man who peered cautiously over his shoulder as if fearful of being watched.

When he reached the crooked tree he began to dig about its roots, and when he had made what seemed a deep hole he took something from his pocket, dropped it into the hole, covered it up and hurried away.

The next thing Echen knew she was in the dear big grandmother's arms, who carried her into the warm light kitchen, where she had tea with the dear little

grandfather, and helped him eat the hot cake baked for him.

The next morning Echen said to him :

“Grandfather, is there a tree in the forest with a crooked trunk that looks as if it was blown sideways by a storm ?”

“Cut down,” said the grandfather.

“Do you know where the stump is ?” asked she again.

The grandfather nodded. He never wasted words.

“Then come close to me, dear grandfather,” whispered Echen. “Will you take a spade and dig about the root of that stump — dig deep, deep, till you find something ?”

The dear, gentle little grandfather nodded again, then took his spade and started off, never thinking of questioning what the child expected him to find.

He would dig for her — if she asked him — clear through to the other side of the world, he loved her so much, and be quite satisfied when he got there if she told him to fill the hole up and leave it.

All that morning Echen was very restless ; and, at last, her grandmother had to put aside her spinning and carry the little girl up and down the room.

“Let us stand at the window,” said Echen, “so we will see grandfather when he comes.”

“He will not come till night,” said the grand-

mother ; nevertheless, to please the child, she stood by the window with her.

In a few moments they saw the grandfather emerging from the well-worn path which led him to his daily work, and running as fast as his little legs could carry him.

Echen trembled all over.

“Hush, darling,” said her grandmother — though her own heart throbbed at seeing him at this unusual hour, and running as if pursued. She thought a wild beast had attacked him in the forest. “Hush, darling ; don’t you see he is safe ? Look ; he is almost here.”

By this time he had reached the cottage, and throwing open the door stood panting and breathless before them.

Without saying a word he thrust his hand into his pocket, and drawing from thence the lost diamond necklace, glittering like a rainbow, threw it into the dear big grandmother’s lap.

“O, Hans ; where did you find it ?” she exclaimed.

The dear little grandfather’s eyes were twinkling with tears ; and he could only point to Echen, who then told her wonderful story about the pictures on the wall.

“O, our Rita !” cried the grandmother ; “now she

and Carlow can come to us ;” and tears rolled down her round, full-moon face.

In the midst of this rejoicing the Curé walked in.

When he saw them all in such a state of excitement of course he wanted to know the cause of it ; and the grandmother told him how the diamond necklace had been lost for twenty-five years, and just found in such a strange and wonderful way.

The Curé was truly glad, and rejoiced with them over their good fortune ; but he opened his eyes with astonishment when he heard about Echen’s pictures on the wall.

He took the little girl on his knee, and questioned her closely.

She told him all about the forest scenes which the trees had thrown upon her wall with their dying breath ; what the spirits of the burning trees had said to her ; and how she had seen the shadow of Fritz Gomer as he hid the necklace under the crooked tree.

When the Curé had heard this he went away ; and as he kissed Echen on her forehead, she fancied she heard him say,

“ Hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes.”

The diamond necklace was taken to Heidelberg

without delay, and sold for a great deal of money; then Rita and Carlow Offermeyer came back to the Vaterland, to their home in the Odenwald, where they lived happily for the rest of their lives with the dear big grandmother, and the dear little grandfather, and Echen, who soon grew strong and well, and danced and played and sang under the forest trees — those trees that ever after seemed like dear living friends to her.

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Before I close this story I want to say a few words about the Curé.

There were two sides to his nature; one was simple and gentle as a little child; that was what drew all little children towards him, and made them love him and like to be with him.

The other side of his nature was thoughtful and scientific. He liked to study and dig into strange, new discoveries and theories, and spend much time searching in musty old books, and making experiments which quite disgusted Gretchen, his tidy old house-keeper.

So you may be sure his busy mind began to think it over; and, instead of setting it all down as the fanciful imagination of a sick child — as we practical people on this side of the water would most probably do — he drew from it a beautiful theory, so based

upon scientific facts that the most incredulous could not doubt it would some day be reduced to the most practical simplicity.

When he had thought a great deal about it, he began to write a book; and, as it has been my good fortune to obtain some of his manuscript, I will lay a few passages before my readers to show how sensible and reasonable his theories are.

“If we study the lives and the thoughts of little children,” he says at the beginning, “we will find they have revelations by the voice of nature which do not come to us, so worldly-wise that we accept nothing but what is established by most undoubted proofs and evidences. ‘Give us a sign,’ we say, when the most astonishing miracles are enacted before our very eyes. Let us come with the hearts of little children, and the mind and intellect of mature manhood, to the contemplation of this wonderful principle — comparatively new to the world — yet which comprehends such tremendous possibilities.”

He then goes on to state his theory, which coincides almost exactly with that of Baron Ruchenbach, of Vienna, that there exists throughout the universe a strange, subtle principle by which we stand in a connection of mutual influence with, not only this world, but the whole material universe.

I pass over the expanding and unfolding of this

theory, sustained, as it is, by appeals to well-established principles of science, and come to a passage near the end of the book.

Having proved most satisfactorily that our thoughts, words and actions make a lasting impression upon the material world, he then says :

“ If we believe all this in its fullest sense, think what spies upon our daily lives are the inanimate objects of nature by which we are surrounded. Think how our good and evil deeds may some day be cried out from those masses of stone, or, as the Prophet Habakkuk has it, by ‘ the beam out of the timber.’ ”

Then comes something which has particularly struck me. It may sound fanciful, and, seemingly drawn from what the spirits of the burning trees told Echen, not much to be relied on ; however, I give it in the Curé’s own words, and he is responsible for it.

“ Scenes enacted in the solemn old forests, under the shady boughs of giant trees, may stand revealed in all their reality when the test of fire is applied to them : then the secrets, good or bad, which have been photographed for so many years upon their hearts may flash forth in shadowy pictures on surrounding objects, plainly to be seen and read by those whose hearts and minds are not too warped and incredulous to believe there are philosophies in heaven and earth not yet dreamt of by man.

“So some day our sight may be keen and spiritualized enough to read in the blazing coal fires — not those castles and houses, trees, solemn pageants, and all queer, fantastic figures which from time immemorial have been seen by watchful eyes in the firelight — but the real scenes which were enacted about them when those coals were living trees, far away back in the old geologic ages.

“I believe this will yet be reduced to a science, and wonderful light be thrown upon those primeval times, now so hazy and indistinct, and which have given rise to so many differences of opinion.”

But, though this Curé is a man of boundless good nature, I fear I will put it to too severe a test if I go on.

His book will be published before long, when I advise all interested in science and discovery to read it.

TIB'S CAP.

IT had been a new one, and when Tib's father bought it, that young gentleman was excessively pleased with it, and of it promised to take the best of care. But, like most of Tib's promises and caps, both came to grief — the cap in particular. Not but that Tib meant to keep his promise ; he certainly did ; and when first the handsome plush affair was placed on his curly head he felt several inches taller, several years older, and positively refused to engage in any such childish pursuit as a game of marbles with Will Hobbs. But then caps will grow old — Tib's did. It generally took only three days for Tib's caps to become old, and when they did get into that sad condition, woe be unto them !

Now Tib possessed this cap in patience for just four days. He kept it carefully, brushed all atoms of dust from its furry surface, deposited it scrupu-

lously on its appointed peg, and, in all ways, endeavored to preserve it. But on the fifth day, while on the way to school, the cap experienced a sudden "taking off," by being knocked from Tib's head by Will Hobbs. At first, Tib was inclined to resent this: but when one boy gave it a kick, and another boy followed it up, and then another and another, Tib, much to his surprise when he reflected about it afterward, fell into this friendly game of football and kicked the cap about as industriously as the others. And then the cap immediately became old. Tib lost all respect for it, and used it and abused it accordingly, and in a variety of ways.

He put eggs in it, and started for the house, and then in a moment of patriotic enthusiasm swung the cap against a post, and crushed the eggs. He used it to mix chicken-feed in; to convey sand while he was building a dam; to serve as a muzzle for Carlo. He fastened it to a long pole, and used it as a seine to entrap unsuspecting minnows, and, on one occasion confined a mouse within it, and carried his prisoner to school. The mouse, however, was not contented; its sharp teeth very speedily cut through the side of the cap, and escaped. But the cap was left, what there was of it, and Tib was happy. He continued to wear it after his usual perverse fashion —

keeping it on his head while in the house, and carrying it in his hand while out of doors.

"I don't know what we shall ever do with that boy, he wears out clothes so," said his father ruefully on one occasion. "He don't seem to care about anything, and I don't know as he will ever amount to anything."

"I don't know as he will," echoed his mother.

And Tib didn't either. He pursued the even tenor of his way in his usual happy-go-lucky style as the days slipped by. And then trouble came to the little brown cottage. Mr. Sturges, that was Tib's father, came home one autumn evening in a very despondent frame of mind. Something had gone wrong with him ; Mrs. Sturges saw that as he sat down in gloomy silence at the tea-table. She watched him anxiously for a little, expecting him to speak, but he did not.

"Why, Philip ! what in the world is the matter ? Are you sick ?" she asked at length.

"No ; I'm not sick."

"What is the matter then ?"

"The mill has stopped and I am out of work for the winter," replied Mr. Sturges, sententiously.

It was Mrs. Sturges' turn to look gloomy. She put the cup of tea, which she had just lifted, back upon the table, untasted. "O, dear ! what shall we do, Philip ?"

"I don't know," answered Mr. Sturges sadly.

"We might get along, somehow, so far as living is concerned ; but there's that mortgage ! I expected to make a payment next month, but I can't do it, and Squire Murphy is not the man to wait."

"Well," said Mrs. Sturges after a painful pause, "I suppose if we lose the place we shall be no worse off than when we began, but — O dear ! what's that ?"

A loud crashing sound was heard over their heads at that moment, a scream of terror, and then a section of plastering fell from the ceiling, followed immediately by a pair of sturdy little legs sticking helplessly in air through the aperture made. The next instant Master Tib dropped into the arms which his father had fortunately extended to receive him.

"O Tib ! how you frightened me ! What were you doing up there ?" asked his mother, yet pale and trembling.

"I — I went up to look for a hornet's nest," replied Tib, almost too frightened to speak.

"A hornet's nest ? How came you to think of hornets being about at this season ?" questioned his father sternly.

"I — I kind o'thought I saw one fly in from outside a little while ago, an' went up to look, an' then — I come down," stammered Tib.

"I should think you did 'come down'," said Mr.

Sturges laughing in spite of his assumed sternness. "And although I admire your directness of purpose yet I also think it rather disastrous to property. And — how did you get all that molasses on your face?"

"Why, Will Hobbs — that is, Will Hobbs an' me, we found a molasses barrel over at Mr. Perkins' with nothin' in it, an' we was tryin' to get the sugar out of it."

"Yes ; that reminds me," remarked Mrs. Sturges, "I sent you over to the store for fifty cents worth of coffee ; did you get it?"

Tib suddenly became interested in the toe of his boot, and studied it intently.

"Did you get the coffee, Tib?"

"No'm ; I lost the money," he answered in a low tone.

"Lost the money! Tib Sturges, what in the world won't you do next?" she exclaimed, catching him by the shoulder and bringing him face to face with her.

"It does seem to me that you are one of the most careless, heedless boys I ever saw, and whether you'll ever be good for anything, or to anybody, I don't know! Here is your father home to night, out of work, and a mortgage on our place, which will be foreclosed unless we pay Squire Murphy one hundred

dollars next month — which I'm sure we cannot — and yet with it all you wear out clothes, destroy property, and lose money as though we were rich as Solomon."

Now this was a very severe and unusual remark for Mrs. Sturges ; she knew it the moment she had made it, and repented as quickly. But the words sank into Tib's heart nevertheless. His face became very sober, and he picked up his old cap from the floor where it had fallen, twirled it uneasily for a moment, and then walked slowly out of the room. Mrs. Sturges called him back presently to supper, and he came ; but all that evening he was very silent, and at an early hour he went to bed. His mother followed him, spoke to him pleasantly, tucked him in, and kissed him good night.

But it was a long time before poor Tib could sleep. He lay awake thinking of what had been said. Was he indeed so very, very useless ? Would he never be of good to anybody, as his mother had said ? only a bother and a hindrance to those who loved him ? He thought about it for some time, about his father being out of work, about Squire Murphy and the mortgage, and then his ideas became confused and he began to fancy that Squire Murphy had erected a fence around the house, and had forbidden the family going

to the spring for water until they paid one hundred dollars. And then he knew no more until daylight.

Although the following morning was bright, cool and crisp, poor Tib did not seem in his usual spirits. He did up the chores without a murmur — his mother noticed that, and spoke kindly of it — but somehow the sober face yet remained. In truth the thoughts that had come to Tib during the night, came to him again in the morning; and more: what could he do to prove that he was not ungrateful, or intentionally careless or heedless? What to help his father and mother in their present trouble? Oh! if only *he* could pay off that mortgage! But then he could not; he was only a boy; and one hundred dollars was a large sum. Yet he could earn something; he would! Tib had been slowly walking down the garden path while thus thinking, and as he reached the gate he climbed up and seated himself on a post overlooking the road.

“Do wish I could get some work,” he murmured, taking off his cap and gazing reflectively at it; “and didn’t wear out clothes so — and caps,” he added as he noticed the hole in the side. “But then I didn’t *wear* out that; a mouse did that. S’pose I oughtn’t to have had a mouse in it, mebbe. Well,” with sud-

den energy, "I'll never, never have another mouse in my cap as long as I live. Wish I knew what to do, though."

Then his eyes wandered away down the road toward the village, until they fastened upon a figure coming toward him. It was a boy, short, thick-set, about Tib's age, with very red hair, round, freckled, merry face, and dressed in garments whose original color was indistinguishable from long usage. Tib recognized him at once.

"Hello, Will! where you goin'?"

Master Will Hobbs — for it was that famous young gentleman — paused in front of the gate, threw a large empty sack he was carrying down on the ground, thrust his hands into his pockets and answered briefly:

"Goin' over to Warren's woods after hickory nuts."

"What you goin' to do with 'em?"

"Sell 'em. Perkins says he'll give me seventy-five cents a bushel for all I'll bring," remarked Master Hobbs with business-like brevity. "Come along, Tib; this old sack will hold more'n I can carry, an' I'll go shares with you."

The offer was certainly tempting, and also in accord with Tib's desire to earn money. He accepted it at once, and ran into the house to tell his mother about it and get her permission. A moment later he

was out again, and the two were trudging merrily along up the old country road.

"I'm real glad you made me that offer," said Tib, after a little, "'cause I wanted to earn some money just awful. I want to help father pay a mortgage."

"A — what?" Master Hobbs stopped short in the road and looked at Tib.

"A mortgage."

"What kind of a thing's that?"

"Why, it's a — Oh, it's a — I don't know exactly. It's somethin' that's stuck on a house somehow, an you have to pay one hundred dollars to get it off."

"Pshaw! I wonder now if we've got one on our house," said Will reflectively. "I'm just goin' to get a ladder an' climb up an' look when I get home. On the roof, I s'pose? Somethin' like a lightnin'-rod. aint it?"

"I don't know — I guess so," answered Tib, vaguely.

"Well, anyway," continued Will, coming back to practical thoughts, "it will take a pile of hickory nuts to get the — what-you-call-it — off your house."

Tib fully agreed with his friend in this, and the two walked on, talking about various matters, until they were fairly within the woods.

Now I haven't space for all the events of this

eventful day. The boys had a good time, and they also gathered a great many nuts — varying the pursuit with many others of pleasure and profit. They chased numerous squirrels, frightened several rabbits, and planned pit-falls and figure-four traps for the future capture of the same. They also spent considerable time near a small creek, trying to dig out a musk-rat, “ ’cause, you see,” as Will assented, “ we can get fifty cents for the skin, if we catch the musk-rat.” But they didn’t catch the muskrat. Late in the afternoon they emerged from the wood, dragging their half-filled sack with them, and began to gather nuts under a large tree by the roadside.

“Wish I was just picking up lumps of gold,” said Tib, pausing a moment and holding up his old cap which he had partly filled with nuts. “We could get more’n seventy-five cents a bushel for ’em, I guess.”

“We could pick ’em up if we was out in Californy,” said Will oracularly. “I was talking with old Sailor Tom t’other day, an’ he’s been everywhere, an’ he says in Californy lumps of gold are lyin’ ’round on the ground like there’d been a hailstorm of ’em.”

“My! wouldn’t I like to be there!” exclaimed Tib.

“Shouldn’t wonder if you would. See here!” Will hesitated a moment, and then approached Tib

and placed his hand impressively on his arm ; "I'll tell you somethin' if you'll never, never tell."

"I won't," replied Tib.

"Well," continued Will in a low tone, "you know Dan Kettler?"

Tib nodded.

"Dan an' me are goin' to Californy as soon as we can get ready ; we're savin' up for it now. Dan's got a dollar an' a half, an' I've got sixty-five cents an' a brass pistol."

"What you goin' to do with the pistol?" questioned Tib.

"Do with it? why shoot Indians, of course," replied Will, patronizingly. "There's lots of Indians out there, an' a feller has got to take care of himself. My pistol has a cracked barrel, but I chinked it up with putty so it's most as good as new. It'll fetch an Indian every pop!"

What further conversation the future Californian would have made is not known, as at this point the conversation was interrupted by a shrill scream.

"What's that?" questioned Tib.

Again the cry was repeated, and both boys hurried out to the front. A turn in the road kept them from seeing anything, but they heard the screams again and again, and also the fierce, rapid strokes of a

horse's hoofs. In a moment the cause was revealed. A light carriage, containing a lady and drawn by a large black horse, came dashing toward them with maddening speed. It was evident the lady had lost all control of the horse, the reins were dragging on the ground, and it was quite as evident that the horse was running away.

All this the boys comprehended in a moment. Master Hobbs — valiant Indian hunter as he was — quickly got out of harm's way, and stood watching the scene with pallid lips. Not so with Tib. He knew that just beyond was a narrow bridge, from which the carriage would probably be dashed with almost certain death to the occupant. He glanced about him, but no help was nigh, and then like an inspiration the thought came that he might save her. Pale, resolute, with the soft wind playing among his curls, he stood in the roadway, holding his old cap firmly in hand. On, on came the horse in terrific gallop, the carriage swaying fearfully from side to side. Nearer and nearer it came, until the hot breath of the horse almost fanned Tib's cheek, and then he raised his cap — raised it with its weight of nuts — and with all the strength of his small arm, hurled it at the horse's head. And then he knew no more.

But the missile had accomplished its purpose. The

old cap had struck the horse full in the eyes, and the rattling of the nuts about his head had so astonished the animal that he stopped instantly, but, alas! not until a cruel hoof had stricken poor Tib to the earth. Master Hobbs came out of his retirement at this moment, and caught and held the horse until a fine-looking gentleman came dashing up, with his steed all in a foam from hard riding.

"Thank God! I find you safe!" exclaimed the gentleman, springing from his horse and clasping the lady in his arms.

"Yes, I am safe," answered the lady with trembling lips, "but I fear it has cost the life of the one who saved me," and she pointed to Tib's unconscious form in the road.

Judge Warren — for it was the wealthy proprietor of the village mills whose wife Tib had saved — picked up the senseless figure, placed it beside his wife in the carriage, and then bidding Will to follow on horseback he sprung into the carriage himself and drove rapidly to the village.

It was a sad home, you may be sure, when poor Tib was carried into the little brown cottage that evening. Physicians were instantly called, and everything was done that could be done, but brain fever speedily set in and it was days before consciousness



HURLED IT AT THE HORSE'S HEAD.

returned. Judge Warren and wife were frequent visitors, and many were the comforts they brought for the small invalid. At last, one bright day, Tib opened his eyes in recognition of those about him. The judge, who happened in just then, was at his side in a moment.

"Well, my little hero, how do you feel this morning? Do you want anything?" he asked.

Tib turned his eyes upon the judge, reflected a moment, and then answered feebly :

"Yes, sir ; I want one hundred dollars."

"Bless me!" and the judge laughed merrily. "Well, Tib, I know what you want it for, but you will not need it for that. Squire Murphy was settled with several days ago. However—" the judge paused, and then with a sudden thought added, "now I want you to give me something."

Tib looked up inquiringly.

"I want you to give me your cap ; I wish to keep it as a memento ; and I will give you a new one in its place."

What a "memento" was Tib did not know, nor did he know what possible use the judge could have for his old cap ; nevertheless he gave it up cheerfully. After that his recovery was rapid. Careful nursing did its work, and one fine afternoon he walked slowly

down to the garden gate. And there he saw Will Hobbs. That young gentleman also seemed to have met disaster, for a bandage was tied about his head and pieces of court-plaster decorated his face.

"Hillo, Will!" called Tib. "What's the matter? When you goin' to Californy?"

"Ar'n't a-goin'," replied Will, gloomily. "You remember that pistol of mine, Tib? Well, t'other day I thought I'd fire it off at a rat to see how 'twould shoot. An' I tell you what, it went off sure enough! It just bu'sted all into flinders, an' knocked me clear off my feet."

"That was too bad," said Tib.

"An' besides that," continued Will, "Dan Kettler instead of savin' up his money, as he promised to do, jest went an' spent it all for a pair of skates an' says he don't care nothin' about Californy. So I had to give up goin'."

Tib offered such sympathy as he thought suited the direfulness of the occasion, but it was cut short by a call from the road. Looking up he saw the judge in his carriage.

"Wouldn't you like a ride this pleasant morning, Tib?"

"Yes sir!" answered Tib, eagerly. "I'll run in and get my ca — my hat."

But the judge held up a new one in reply. "Won't this do? I promised you one, you know."

Tib sprang into the carriage, and the handsome new cap was placed in his hands, but he forgot to notice its fineness or beauty as he stared in surprise at its strange lining—a thick roll of paper around the edge, and in the center a package. Tib lifted the packet—it felt like a book. Then he looked at the roll of paper.

"Is that put in to make the cap fit? 'cause 'tis too large?" he asked.

"Not exactly," laughed the judge. "Not to make the cap smaller, but to make your head larger. Open it, Tib."

Tib opened it and found a crisp new bill—the one hundred dollars he had wished for—then another and another, five of them. On the paper were three words: "For Tib's Education."

"How good you are!" said Tib slowly. Then as he surveyed what seemed to him an astounding sum of money, he exclaimed: "Whew! won't I have an awful lot of knowledge! Why that'll make me know enough to be president and have enough left to buy a horse!"

"Perhaps," smiled the judge. "So you understand how it is to make your head larger, eh?"

But Tib's parents understood the matter far better, and appreciated the value of the gift more than he could then do. And that afternoon, when Tib had invited Will Hobbs to examine his new book with him, Mrs. Sturges looked in upon the two boys, deep in the troubles of that wonderful sea-faring man, Robinson Crusoe, and said, without the least intention of a pun, as she turned away:

"Well! well! he can't half know what good has come to him — an education! That throw just *capped* his fortunes."

THE BOY-CHICKEN.

WHAT would you think of a boy who wanted to be a chicken?

You would think him a strange little fellow to be willing to leave his own, nice, warm bed, and climb up on a perch in a dark place to roost with the chickens, wouldn't you?

Georgie's father had just moved from town to the country, and Georgie took much delight in looking at the oxen, horses and sheep with which the farm was stocked. In fact he was disposed to be almost too friendly with them, and kept his mother in a fever of anxiety lest he might go too near their heels ; but his chief favorites were the turkeys and chickens which he fed every morning at the back door of the farmhouse. He knew them all and had a name for each.

'There was old Muffy and her brood of chicks that looked exactly like straw-colored velvet balls bobbing around ; there was Katy, the blue hen ; there was the gallant dun rooster, the very pink of politeness and

devotion ; there were whole families of speckled Dominiques and snow-white bantams ; but, above all these was "Dandy Jim," the leader of a host of handsome "Black Spanish," that stepped about in a lordly way that Georgie admired very much. They roosted in a



SEATED IN THE WAGON.

wagon-shed, on poles and perches extending along each side ; and Georgie quite envied them their good fortune in not having to undress and sleep in a bed like "other folks," as he watched them filing into the dark quiet building, one by one, soon after sunset every evening.

One day, when he was playing there in this big

bed-room, seated on the wagon whipping and halloing to an imaginary fiery steed which he pretended was hitched to it, he cast an eye up toward the perches and was surprised to see how very close to him they looked. Dropping the twine string which he called his "lines," he scrambled up and was soon balancing himself on the lowest pole, sustaining no damage in his ascent save a long scratch on the back of his hand, caused by a broken rusty nail. He forgot to cry about that, however, so pleased was he at his success in getting up there, though, at any other time, it is probable he would have roared long and loud ; now, he contented himself with rubbing the sore hand up and down the leg of his trousers a few times and then thought no more of it.

His mind was occupied with the far mightier thought of being a chicken, and he resolved to begin his career as a barnyard fowl that very evening.

Presently he heard his father's voice calling : "Georgie ! Georgie !" so he swung himself down avoiding the broken nail this time, and ran skipping up to the house where he found supper was ready in the big square kitchen. His father and mother laughed heartily when he unfolded his plan of sleeping with the chickens thereafter.

"You think you can manage to stick on the

roost while you are asleep, eh?" asked his father.

"Course I can, papa," replied Georgie, "for I tried it this afternoon with my eyes shut and I didn't fall off one bit!"

"But remember it will be all dark in there," said



SETTLED COMFORTABLY FOR THE NIGHT.

his mother, "and if you were to fall it would hurt you, —perhaps break your arm or your leg, and then you'd be a little crippled chicken all the rest of your life."

"And Georgie," added his mother, "won't you be afraid of the big hoot-owl that comes out of the woods at night to carry off the chickens?"

"No indeed! If a big old owl comes around, I'll just pick up a stone and stop his hooting quicker'n lightning," said Georgie bravely.

But the words did stick a little in his throat; for, to tell the truth, he hadn't thought of any danger and it might be a little unpleasant to be gobbled up in his sleep and carried off to the woods to furnish a meal for the baby owls.

However, after he had finished his supper, he walked out to the wagon-shed where he found the chickens already assembling. He selected a good place for himself and clambered up by the side of Katy, the blue hen. She gave two or three surprised clucks as much as to say, "*You are a queer chicken.*"

But Georgie shut his eyes and tried to put his head under his wing, only as he had no wing he was obliged to use his arm instead. It took some time for them all to get in and settled comfortably for the night, probably because they were astonished to see such a strange-looking fowl perched up in their bedroom; but at last all was quiet.

Meanwhile, his father had watered the stock and finished his "chores" and returned to the house.

"Where's Georgie?" he asked "I haven't seen him since supper."

"Perhaps he is playing in the yard, somewhere,"

replied his wife who was busy sweeping off the back porch.

Mr. Shaw, (for that was the name of Georgie's father) looked through the yard, in the swing, under the old russet tree, out on the garden fence where Geor-



HE RUSHED OUT OF THE BUILDING.

gie had a "see-saw," and in every place where his little son usually played, but failed to find him.

"I do wonder if he has really gone to roost with the chickens," said he as he came back to his wife. "I believe I'll slip around to the back of the wagon-shed and make a noise like an owl, — that'll bring him in the house, I'll warrant."

“You will frighten him to death, Joseph! He might fall and get terribly hurt,” she expostulated.

“O, no! It’s light in there yet and he can see to get down easily enough,” laughed Mr. Shaw as he slipped quietly down the path leading to the shed.

Just about that time, Georgie, whose neck was aching from being twisted and held down so long in an unusual position, raised his head and looked around him.

Through the dusky twilight that crept in through the cracks, he could dimly define the rows of silent feathery objects all about and above him. He was saying to himself, “How pretty they look! I’d rather be a chicken forty times over, than a boy and have to sleep in a trundle-bed,” when, close to the shed, he heard a low, dismal “*h-o-o-t, t-o-o-t, tu, w-h-o-o!*”

Georgie straightened up, pricked up his ears and listened. It must have been the wind. Hark! there it was again — a little louder than before, and apparently immediately under him or in a tree close to the shed. “*H-o-o-t, t-o-o-t, t-o-o-o-t!*” it went.

No, it was not the wind; it must certainly be an old father-owl coming to carry off a chicken to his children. The cold sweat broke out on Georgie’s forehead; he felt a shiver run down his back-bone, and with a racket and a scrabble he threw himself

down into the empty wagon, then, stepping on the wheel, with one bound he reached the floor with a heavy thump and rushed out of the building amid the shrill squalling of the fowls that had been rudely brought back from dream-land by his noisy descent.

"He stopped not for stock, he stopped not for stone," not even for the one with which he was going to knock the hoot out of the owl "quicker'n lightning;" but, looking neither to the right nor the left, he ran breathless into the kitchen where his mother sat paring apples for apple-butter.

"Well, Georgie! what's the matter?" she inquired. "I thought you were sleeping with the chickens in the wagon-shed to-night. Where have you been?"

"O mamma! I was. And don't you think, just after I had got into a good jolly nap there came an awful old owl and — O, my! but it had the biggest eyes!"

His father, who had entered by another door and had been a silent listener, joined Georgie's mother in laughing merrily at this description, but did not undeceive him then thinking his little boy's experience might keep him from such exploits in the future; and so it proved. Georgie was thoroughly cured of his desire to change his nature and condition, and long years after laughed over the story of the time, when, as a boy-chicken, he roosted out in the shed with the other fowls.

PROUTY'S FORTUNE.

PROUTY was a tramp. His birthplace was St. Louis and that was about all he knew of his early history. He had tramped from St. Louis to St. Jo, from thence to Kansas City, and so onward until now he had reached the great prairies farther westward.

One day in early autumn, Prouty lay loafing in the shade of a hickory tree a few miles from Garnet, whither he was travelling.

He felt hungry, and therefore, low-spirited. In general, Prouty was a happy-go-lucky fellow, handsome-eyed, and naturally polite, and so he had met uncommon favor from the communities through which he travelled. Everybody said, "Nice fellow -- what a pity!"

But this morning Prouty had had no breakfast. An ill-natured house-wife had set a pack of dogs upon him when he had made known his wants at a farmhouse, and he had been obliged to walk away upon an empty stomach.

As Prouty lay dozing in the shade there was a sudden flash of green and scarlet in his eyes, and he heard a girl's voice : " Whoa, Wild-fire ! Stand still, Wild-fire ! I say."

The next moment a small black pony, with a crimson velvet saddle, dashed down the prairie, and a little green-robed figure, its glossy head crowned by a scarlet velvet cap, came settling down at his very feet like a brilliant bird tumbling from its perch with ruffled plumage.

" It's the first time in my life I was ever thrown from a horse ! " exclaimed the girl as she picked herself up, disdaining the offered hand.

Prouty had sprung to his feet with an elasticity quite unlike his former lazy aspect. " I could catch him in a minute," he said now, eagerly, looking after the flying pony.

The girl shook her head. " When he does get away we have to let him run till he's ready to come back."

But Prouty was racing down the prairie like an an-

telope ; and in five minutes more it was over. Wild-fire, out of the corner of his bright eye, saw his pursuer, veered about and ran in among the trees of a strip of timber, and Prouty went in after him, and quietly brought him out and walked him back to his young mistress.

"Well," said the girl, "this is nice. I'd like to pay you for it. *Would* you feel insulted if money were offered you? you see I can't tell from your looks whether you would or not."

Prouty turned crimson. For the first time he felt shame in thinking of the good-for-nothing gypsy life he was leading.

"*Me* feel insulted if money were offered me?" at length he stammered. "Well yes, I believe I should. You don't know what I am, do you? — I'm glad you couldn't quite see it all."

"Perhaps you are a herds-boy thrown out of work?" surmised the girl a little curiously.

"No, a *tramp*," returned the boy with desperate candor.

An expression of surprise glanced through the girl's black eyes. "*Are* you a regular, professional tramp?" she asked, half turning from him.

"A reg'lar," said Prouty, half turning from her in turn — "seeking my fortune," he added with a laugh.

"Then why don't you stop somewhere and go to work?" exclaimed the girl indignantly. "I'd be just ashamed to get my living out of other folks! Why, I know *girls* that would work their fingers off before they'd take a crust of bread they didn't earn — you don't hear of girl-tramps!"

"Jes' so," said Prouty. Then after a minute, he said it again with a sort of a sigh — "Jes' so."

The girl looked at Prouty keenly for a moment as he stood against the tree, looking up into the sky, with compressed lips. After looking long enough, she decided that something might be made of him, if a helping hand were held out to him in the right direction.

"See here, *would* you work if you had it to do?"

"Don't know," said Prouty. But he flashed upon her from his handsome eyes a shy, grateful look that strengthened the opinion she had formed of him.

"If you really *are* seeking your fortune," she continued, "I believe I can start you on the road. . But I should want to find out first what kind of stuff you're made of."

"Jes' so," said Prouty — but his girl-questioner could see his ears fairly "prick up."

"I kin put myself about it at once," he added, in a moment.

"I live just over yonder," said she in reply, "and

my name is Frederica Hayes. They call me Fred for short, and that suits me, for I *always* thought I ought to be a boy."

Mounted on Wildfire and followed by her strange acquaintance, this queer "Fred" rode away toward a grove, in which a great farm-house soon revealed itself and about it lay the broad rich acres owned by Mr. Hayes. It was a pleasant place, and under fine improvement for one lying in the heart of a new country.

Fred was waiting for Prouty at the gate as he came up. They walked together toward the barn, she leading Wildfire by the bridle.

"I didn't tell you," she remarked, "that I'm in business for myself and doing well." Under cover of her long lashes, Fred enjoyed Prouty's surprise for a few moments; then she continued:

"I've a good sized drove of calves growing for the market, and I bought them all with my own money."

"Money your father gave you," Prouty said quickly.

"No indeed, beg your pardon," said Fred proudly. "I earned it, keeping bees. Raised peanuts and bought the bees. Now *you've* got to tend the bees for one thing, to prove to me what kind of stuff you're made of."

"I see. Bees sting, and that's what you want," Prouty said with a laugh.

A roguish smile lurked round Fred's mouth, but she made no answer.

Any one whom their independent, "no nonsense" Fred chose to introduce, always met a kind reception from Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, and Prouty was allowed to remain upon the farm as Fred's assistant and she paid him day wages from her own purse.

Fred's apiary was quite extensive, and the care of it occupied a considerable portion of her time. At this season the bees were swarming, and there was honey to be taken up. Fred moved serenely in and out among the hives unharmed as though she were a queen bee; but Prouty's experience proved severe. He did not understand the art of pacifying the ferocious insect, and goaded by the loss of honey, they poured on him, instead of Miss Fred, the violence of their wrath. Prouty's face and hands were pierced with stings. But he held steadily to his work, surprising his observant mistress by his tenacity. But she said not a word about "his fortune" as yet.

When the bees gave time, the peanut crop was harvested. Fred took her hoe, and worked with Prouty, day after day, and there were many long talks, but not one word of "the fortune."

Finally, one October morning, when the summer growth upon the prairie had changed to short brown herbage, Fred and Prouty made a trip together. She



FRED WAS WAITING FOR PROUTY AT THE GATE.

arranged it one night. "Have the horses saddled at eight o'clock," she said. And then she added with a roguish smile, "I'm going to take you to see 'your fortune.'"

They rode through a range of timber, and on, until they reached a point of land formed by the confluence of a creek and river. This point was strewn with rocks and filled with hollows, and among these lay a vast number of bones bleached by the sun and rain of many seasons.

Fred pointed to these bones silently. Prouty stared at them, then at her.

"There's a profitable crop for you to gather," said Fred, *very* dryly.

Prouty was still more puzzled.

Said Fred, "A freshet drowned a drove of cattle here some years ago, and left their bones for *you* to speculate upon. There is at least a car-load hereabouts. You can ship them to St. Louis and get a good price for them. They will be ground, and mixed with lime, and the gardeners will buy them in the spring to fertilize their land."

"That *is* an idea," said Prouty, throwing up his hat. And then he added with sincere admiration, "You're a born speculator if you are a girl!"

Fred, it must be admitted had always felt a little

proud of her "business resources" and she was pleased by Prouty's appreciation. "'Jes' so,'" said she with a roguish smile. "Who but you would have thought of it!" said Prouty.

"No one *has* thought of it or they would have been gathered long ago. Cattle plagues have strewn the country with bones as white and clean as crystal. You might spend the whole year gathering them and not exhaust the crop. I wanted to go into it myself, but father thought it wasn't suitable business for a girl."

Well, Prouty accepted the bones as his "fortune." Mr. Hayes rented him a team and he went to work with all the fast developing energy of his nature. The proceeds, as they came in, were invested in young stock, which joined Fred's drove, Prouty paying for their keeping by picking corn and doing other farm work through the winter.

Prouty is now a successful buffalo bone merchant on the Plains. But for his handsome eyes, and smile that never needed changing, one would not recognize in him the young tramp who "struck luck" by catching Wildfire that autumn morning. He makes a yearly visit at the Hayes farm, and Fred is very proud of him you may believe.

LEFT-HANDED LUCK.

IN THE Meyenberg's house there were four bedrooms. In one slept the father and mother, in another, Barbara Katrina and Sophie ; in the third, Felix and Ludwig, and in the fourth, the maid Rosamond.

On Monday, the 27th of August, 1877, the day on which my story begins, Rosamond rang the first bell at half past six ; and, in doing so, she dropped it. She heard the children laugh as she picked it up, and Ludwig called over the stairs :

“I say, Rosamond, which hand did you hold that in?”

Rosamond smiled and tossed her head, but she did not answer, and went back to her muffins and peaches in the kitchen.

When Mr. Meyenberg heard Ludwig call, he smiled, and saying, “It is a good beginning!” laid down his

right cuff which he was about to button on, and, instead, put on the left one.

In the children's rooms there was no little laughter. They kept a close watch on each other ; and he or she who put on a right shoe first, or held a comb in the right hand, was at once called to order.

Down-stairs, Rosamond burned her fingers and broke a cup ; and when she carried the eggs in her left hand, she let the basket fall, and the new carpet was spoiled ; and that, Mrs. Meyenberg said, was not lucky, nor was it a good beginning.

The children were all a little late ; for dressing had been unusually troublesome and unusually amusing.

At breakfast, the coffee-pot had changed places with the cups, and had gone to the left, and Mr. Meyenberg said that he would rather, in the future, have hash for breakfast ; he could use a spoon in his left hand very well, but it was not so easy to carve beefsteak.

When Sophie took her milk in her right hand, her mother told her to put it down ; and there was much fun over poor Ludwig, who spilt his coffee, who could not butter his bread, and who was, his father feared, fatally right-handed.

That noon Mr. Meyenberg had a check returned from bank because the cashier did not recognize his

signature, it being written backward, with the left hand ; and at home, Mrs. Meyenberg gave up her sewing, as she was not able to use her thimble on a new finger. The reform in the family was very thorough. They not only used their left hand in preference to the right, but they would not use their right hand at all if they could help it ; and Barbara drove her music-teacher half crazy by playing the air in the bass and the chords in the treble.

Of course they had a reason for this sudden reversion of their habits ; and, possibly, it was, you say, some conviction that, having two servants, it was folly to keep one in idleness and to make the other do all the work.

Our two hands are exactly alike ; they have the same number of fingers, of joints ; and if the right hand has seventy-seven bones, so has the left. When the learned men talk of the *Biceps flexor*. and the *Brachialis anticus*, the muscles of the left arm and hand have as much interest in their fine Latin names as those of the right. The ligaments in one are woven as curiously in and out as in the other ; the nerves feel, the blood runs, the pulse beats alike in both ; but we treat them very differently.

Our right hand has all the honor, and it does all the work. It writes our letters, carries our money,

works our telegraphs, sets our type, carves, paints, sews, lifts, shakes hands, does our sums, draws our maps, cuts our magazines, raises the hat in salutation, puts the ring on the bride, and baptizes the children.

The left hand is allowed to help. It holds the fork if the right hand is occupied ; it lifts the lid of a box, it holds the nail for the hammer ; but when it is busiest, it is simply waiting on its brother. It wears the rings, and is generally weaker than the other.

We never allow it to acquire any expertness, and so if it ever happens that the right hand is disabled, it knows nothing. It has the same flexible joints, but they grasp awkwardly ; the seventy-seven bones are of little use, and as for the *Biceps flexor*, it turns out to be a very valueless muscle when work is in request. The left hand cannot sew, nor write, nor draw, nor set type, nor fire a gun. It is a poor reliance in the hour of need, and the only thing we can do is to call upon some one's else right hand to do what is necessary for us.

It is, therefore, easy to be seen that if the Meyenberg family thought it time to educate their left hands they were very wise.

But no, whatever reason they had for abandoning the right hand, the education of the left certainly had no influence with them.

It might possibly, you think, have been on account of the connection the hands have with the brain ?

We have, you know, two brains, or, more properly speaking, one brain is divided into two parts, each perfect, each having its own work ; the business of the left brain being to direct the operations of the right side of the body, and of the right brain to care for the left side. In return, the hands and feet strengthen the brain as they use it. So you see, a learned doctor says, that if you never use your left hand, the right brain is weakened ; and when paralysis comes, it has not the same power of resistance possessed by the other, and so the left side is paralyzed.

Mr. Meyenberg had read all this, and had quite agreed with the learned doctor that we ought to strengthen both sides of the body and of the brain alike ; and as it is easy to understand that he would not wish any of his family to be paralyzed, this would have been an excellent reason for their using and educating the weaker half.

Yet this was *not* their reason.

It was for luck.

Left-handed luck ! The way of it was this. They had read, or Barbara had, and told them all about it, of Dr. Schliemann's luck, and how he won it, as the story has been told by Miss Kate Field.

In the first place Schliemann was not lucky as a boy, although, when he was a very little fellow and lived at home, he must have had a pretty good time. Then he was petted, and his father told him stories out of Homer's *Iliad*, and he never tired of talking of Troy and persisting that, even if the city was destroyed — and that much he had to grant — the walls must still be in existence.

He did not care much in these days for stories of dwarfs or of mermaids, but the deeds of Hector fired his soul, and he would rather have seen Helen of Troy than any queen alive. These were, as I have said very good times ; but after awhile his father died, the family was broken up, and the little fellow had to go out into the world to seek his own fortune.

It did not seem to be a very good fortune that he found. His first venture was in a small grocery stove, where he sold herring and cheese, went to bed late, arose early, and at last injured himself lifting a heavy barrel.

After this his master had no use for him. He wanted no sick boys about ; and so he discharged Schliemann, who now, penniless and ailing, set out very forlornly, to seek a better fortune.

He walked one hundred and thirty miles to Hamburg, begging his meals from house to house. In

Hamburg he had a relative who put him as cabin-boy, on board a ship going to Venezuela. Here he was beaten, badly treated, shipwrecked, starved and miserable ; and so he never calls this a pleasant part of his life. At last he reached Germany again, and in Mecklenberg was so poor he feigned sickness that he might go to a hospital and be sheltered. There he rested for a little while, and wrote to his Hamburg friend who, this time, did better for him, and secured for him a situation with a merchant, for whom he copied letters, cashed money, and probably ran errands.

“ But now,” said Barbara, making a fine rhetorical climax, “ see how everything has altered ! He is rich, he is famous, he has discovered Ancient Troy ; and if he never did see Helen, he found her head-dress, and his wife had her own portrait taken in it ! When you consider that this was all luck, and all because he used his left hand, it quite takes the breath away.”

When her mother said that it might not have been all luck, Barbara appealed to Dr. Schliemann's own words. He had said it was, and if he did not know, who did ?

The way of it was this : one day, while Schliemann was still poor and unknown, he met a man who owned a water-cure, and was very prosperous, but who once

had been a tailor, and lived in the depths of poverty : but those bad days were gone and now he lacked for nothing.

Well, he had a secret, but he was generous, and he told it to the little Schliemann boy.

It was certainly a very simple secret. Nothing more than to always use your left hand, your left foot, first !

The ex-tailor had tried it. He had put on his left shoe, his left glove, his left everything, first. He had reversed the order of life, and the generally neglected members of his body had rewarded him.

He had recognized their existence ; they had brought him luck. He prospered. He had given up the needle, and taken to the wet sheet, and the money came rolling in. " Now," he said, "*you* do the same. I began late ; I was fifty-seven years old before luck turned, but you begin *now* and have a fortunate life !"

Schliemann heeded his advice. From that moment his right hand played the second in everything, and if his right foot went first into a room it was called back and the left took its place.

At once he began to prosper ; and he now advises his friends to try the left-hand experiment.

"It is easy enough," he says, "and see what it has done for me!"

Now, I do not want anyone to interrupt us here, and tell how he studied at this time, and qualified himself for life! How he resolved to know English, and so how he went to work at it. It is true that when he ran, and when he walked, he carried his grammar and dictionary under his arm, he read aloud, he took a lesson every day, he wrote compositions upon Achilles, or Priam, or some such subject; he learned these by heart, and repeated them to his teacher. He lived poorly, and spent over half his money on his studies; and in six months he could read and speak English.

That was good luck!

Then he gave six more months to French, and as for Spanish, Italian, Dutch and Portuguese, he was such a fortunate fellow that six weeks was enough for each of these.

Then there is the story of his studying Russian. He had an idea that it would help him in life to be a linguist; but one day he found out that Russian was, after all, the one language he needed. The firm for which he worked wanted to negotiate with some Russians for indigo, but the Russians spoke no German,

and no one in the town spoke Russian. What was to be done?

"This!" said the left-handed gentleman. "*I* will study the language."

And he did. He hunted up some old books and set to work. Here indeed was a task! The language is very difficult. The books were poor, and, to make matters worse, were in "Old Russian." But this last fact Schliemann did not know. Old and New Russian were alike to him!

In six weeks he was ready to write a business letter for the firm. He had not only studied night and day, but he had talked. He had no Russian with whom to converse, but he hired an old Jew for auditor, and for an hour every day the old fellow sat still and Schliemann shouted Russian at him. The Jew didn't understand, but perhaps he liked it none the less.

The next thing that happened to this lucky fellow was the offer from his firm of a partnership in Moscow, with a capital of about forty thousand dollars.

Of course he took it — with his left hand, I suppose — and, left foot foremost, went to Moscow. Here he was lucky and unlucky; but he made money enough to live easily, and, what is more, after a time to sail away to Greece and dig up Troy, and, as Barbara said, to find Helen's head-dress in her tomb.

It is not worth while to tell you how he worked to get his money, how he watched the markets, and how he bought and sold. He improved his memory, he learned to write a good hand ; when he was over forty he went to Paris to study History ; he came to the United States, and lived here as a citizen. He married a Greek wife who could repeat the *Iliad* from memory ; and in almost everything this eager, open-eyed, enterprising Schliemann was fortunate.

“It is nonsense,” said Barbara, when she was telling them all this and more, “to say there is no such thing as luck, for there is. Now there are my canaries ; they always die, and Lydia Hanson always has such luck with hers.”

“If you fed yours regularly — ” began Felix.

“That has nothing to do with it,” interrupted Barbara, speaking very decidedly. “I have no doubt Lyd often forgets her birds, but she has luck with everything.”

“Yes,” said her father, “there is Jim Bradbury ; you remember him, mother ? He and George Lynd were in Prince’s printing office together, and they both used to say they meant to be rich ; and they would plan out together what they meant to do. They have never parted, that can be said ; but Lynd owns the concern, and has taken his family to Europe.

while Bradbury is a pressman. Now if that isn't luck I don't know ; for one had as good a chance as the other."

And so they had. It was true that Lynd made a right hand of himself in the business, while Bradbury was content to be a left one, and do what he was told ; and even Dr. Schliemann would not say it was lucky to *be* a left hand.

Then there is Felix Meyenberg himself. One day he met a boy from St. Louis who said something about the North Pole.

"I mean to go there some day," said Felix.

"Why, so do I!" exclaimed the boy. "I intend to discover the passage through."

"So do I," replied Felix.

"It's very curious," said the boy, "how many people do care for the North Pole. People are all the time telling me something about it."

"No one ever tells me," said Felix. "I don't believe they would if I were in Greenland."

"I don't know why they shouldn't," replied the boy. "Why, I was once on a steamboat and I said something to a man about Polar bears, and he told me he had been with one of the parties, cooking for Sir John Franklin. We had a good talk, and he told me a great deal. As for newspaper scraps, I have a

whole book of them, and it was only yesterday I saw something in a cook-book about keeping meat fresh that I thought would be useful."

"You're a lucky one," said Felix. "Now, I never see such things."

"Perhaps you don't keep thinking about them as I do. I remember once my father asked me if I ever thought how common salmon-color was, and I said, no, I *never* saw it anywhere, and he told me to count how many times I saw it the next day; and it was ten times."

"That was luck," said Felix. "You don't see salmon-color ten times every day,"

"No," replied the boy; "but that day you know I kept thinking about it."

It was natural, while the boys were talking upon such subjects, that Felix should tell his companion about Dr. Schliemann, his explorations and his luck.

"Well," said the St. Louis boy, "if I thought it would take me to the North Pole, I would tie up my right hand in a sling and make my left hand work for both. In fact, I don't know but I'd take to hopping and dispense with my right foot altogether."

"It turned Dr. Schliemann's luck, and *I* am going to try it, for one," said Felix.

"It seems to *me*," said the St. Louis boy, "that Schliemann's hard work counted for something. But I often think of what my father once said when our Jim was complaining of his luck :

" 'Suppose you wanted to go to New York, Jim,' he said, 'what would you do?'

" 'Why, I would take the cars,' said Jim.

" 'Which cars?'

" 'The Eastern line, of course, — those going to New York.'

" 'You would not take the Southern or Western?'

" 'Certainly not,' says Jim.

" 'If you did,' says my father, 'you might get to New Orleans or to San Francisco, but I hardly believe you would find New York. I should call it good luck if you did. And, Jim, if you were to start without any money to buy a ticket, and were to get a ride in a Pullman all the way, I should call *that* very good luck indeed ; but if, while you were standing at the corner, wishing you had the money, and that I would let you go, you were suddenly to find yourself in front of the Astor House with a pocket full of silver, then words would fail me. To say *that* was luck would be tame.' "

"And so," added the St. Louis boy, "that is the way this *luck* often seems to me. If *I* want a bird in the hand, or the two in the bush, I find I have to just go and trap them ! "

THUSIE'S FOURTH OF JULY.

IT was different from any other Fourth of July. There wasn't a man, woman or child in Bayfield whose blood did not tingle with a patriotic desire to "celebrate," not only because of the birthday of our nation's liberty, but for the glorious anniversary of old Bayfield town itself. One hundred years old on this day! Little Thusie Bassett wouldn't have been in the least surprised if the sun had stood still. It would only have been just what *ought* to have happened on this "Centennial Day."

The day was everything that *could* be desired. Early the crowds began to assemble and the village green was gay with the happy folk who came proudly from their simple homes. Was ever anything quite so fine — the singers marching into the dilapidated old church with their books; the tables in the grove

of fine maples just a little distance off fast becoming resplendent under the fingers of ambitious matrons and rosy-cheeked maidens; the grand new band, blaring and drumming so joyously that lazy farm-horses came hurrying up the steep hills to be there in time; the little streamers of red, white and blue bespangling the harnesses; the big flag floating from the church belfry; the cannon booming on the village green?

Thusie just clasped her hands and sighed. She had "run and raced herself most to death," as Aunt Martha observed, thus early in the day. She had fallen down and scraped the skin off from a large place on her knee; she had torn a hole in her best frock; but what cared she for such slight mishaps? Was she not part and parcel of this glorious Fourth of July? Tired as she was she swung her own small flag bravely, and glanced with pride at the little bunch of red, white and blue ribbons that Aunt Fanny had pinned on her white dress; and then away she went again, her small figure curvetting and frisking in and out as she "celebrated" with the other children.

Well, the oration was over. What it was about, Thusie, for her life, couldn't have told. But the big words sounded fine; and when, at the end of all the names which were conscientiously read by Mr. Slo-

cum, the children by a preconcerted arrangement stood up and waved their flags, *didn't* she spring to her small feet! and *didn't* she wave her flag!

And the Township History — to the large-eyed child, crowded in on the hard bench, it was simply wonderful; and when her dear grandpa's honored name was mentioned, she thought she never should be tired of sitting there to listen. But, after a while, the prickles began to run up and down her legs, — oh, if she could only stick them out straight *once*! So she was not very sorry, after all, when the end came and the delighted people began to move about and draw long breaths again, and she could descend to the commonplace pleasures of an every day romp.

"Thusie, come here!" called Sarah Jones. "I want to tell you something. No, Nelly Smith, you ain't comin'! You'll go and tell!" And Sarah dragged Thusie off, and with an arm around her waist and persuasion in her voice she told of a secret — O, such a *great* one! — and enlarged enthusiastically upon it to the two or three other girls who were graciously allowed to join.

"Now you see, girls, this is what we're going to do. Don't you *never* tell — '*certain true, black and blue, hope I may die if I do!*' you must say; because, you see, it's a great secret."

"O, no Sarah!" said timid little Frasier Newcomb, "that's wicked."

"Poh! no, you goosie! it don't mean anything."

What Sarah wanted them to say it for if it *didn't* mean anything, the girls didn't clearly see; but they repeated the magic words.

"There now! I can tell you with some comfort," said Miss Sarah, seating herself on the grass in a sheltered nook, which example was followed by the others till they formed a circle; then, in a low voice and with many mysterious gestures, she unfolded the wonderful news.

"Well, girls! you know the fireworks to-night?"

At this, Thusie gave an ecstatic little wriggle. Sarah gave her a push.

"Thusie Bassett, you sat on my toe!"

Then she went on: "Well, you all know we can't see anything on the Green, the folks crowd and jam so; so we *are going up into the old belfry!*"

"O!—O!" screamed two or three of the girls.

"*Sh!* if you don't want all the boys coming."

"But, Sarah, I don't see *how*," said one of the girls.

"They won't let us. You know Deacon Smith said *nobody* must go up there; 'twan't safe, he said. He said the old shell would break through or tumble off, if a great crowd got in."

"Anybody knows better than that, and besides, we ain't a crowd! I guess 'tain't coming down for five girls! And just think how we can see the rockets and comets from the big window!"

"It would be splendid," said Roxy Thompson, "but I should be frightened most to death, Sarah."

"And isn't there mice — and things?" timidly asked Lucia Russell.

Thusie said nothing. She knew her mother never would hear to the lovely plan. Besides, she was to go with the rest of the family to "Uncle John's." O, dear! if she could only do as she was a mind to, like Sarah.

"Besides it will be dark, Sarah," pursued Lucia.

"No 'twon't; it'll be as light's anything. Why, the fireworks go shooting up, *whiz! bang!* all through the sky," — and Sarah suited the action by an expressive fling. "I've seen 'em when I went down to Boston last year." And Sarah descanted on the glories and wonders in store for them till she got them wild with delight and ready for anything. Having a head for contrivance she had the plan ready for getting into the church.

"You know, girls," she said, "they've decided to ring the bell when they're ready to set off the fireworks. Well, when Joe Vance goes up to ring it, *we*

must be all ready to creep up after him. He's awful slow, you know ; and besides, he'll be making such a noise with the bell he can't possibly hear us. And I'm going to have my pocket full of candy and we can sit up there and see the whole thing just *elegant* ! So, Thusie, you be sure and be here. We're to meet under the big oak tree. And Frasier, *if* you tell there'll be the most awful things happen to you ! And Lu, don't wait to wash all the dishes for your Aunt Betsey ; she can do 'em for once. And Tildy —"

"If you want any dinner, come along ; they're all sitting down !" screamed Rob Davis, poking his head into their retreat with a whoop that made them jump.

Away they all ran, and fireworks and belfry were soon forgotten in the glories of that table—a real Fourth of July celebration table ! Flowers, pyramids of cakes with flags flying from the apex, cookies, tarts, iced loaves, — every cook had done her best.

Sunset was coming on before the last left the tables, and even then Thusie had scarcely thought over her promise. She only vaguely realized what a forbidden thing she and the others were going to do. I think if she had really and *fairly* reflected upon it, she would have refused to have anything to do with the whole thing and stood firm. "My think *always*

comes afterwards," a little girl once said, and it's most always a *sorry* think!

Well, the sun went down, Great gold and red clouds came out all over the sky; there was one cloud nearly white, with deep red borders and a rosy centre, on the blue patch that had been so bright all day.

"See, it's put on red, white and blue!" called Henry Carter, and all the children rushed to see.

"**T**husie," said her mother, as she drew her little girl who was racing along with the others towards her, "I am going home now to put Gracie to bed, and when you get ready you run right along up to Uncle John's. Aunt Fanny went an hour ago, she was so tired."

Thusie's heart gave a naughty little leap. Was anything ever so convenient! Merry groups were already getting "the best places" for a good view. She knew it must be time to be at the meeting-place under the big oak. Away she ran with rapid footsteps and was soon under its shelter. She was the first one there, but in a minute Sarah Jones and Tildy Thompson rushed up and threw their arms around her; then Lucia came — all there but Frasier.

"Why don't she come, the stupid thing!" fretted Sarah. "There's old Joe crossing the Green, now; we *can't* wait for her any longer."

That moment Frasie, panting and frightened, hurried up and was pulled into their shelter.

"What made you so late?" demanded Sarah.

"Oh! I couldn't help it," panted Frasie. "I had to run every step of the way. My little brother Teddy and cousin Augusta *would* come, and old fat Mrs. Brown wanted me to get her a chair, and then I tumbled down and —"

"Well, never mind," said Sarah, "you're here now, at last. Come, girls, now for it!" And with many a whisper and giggle they stole along under cover of the darkness after old Joe who was blundering up the stairs, making so much racket himself that he couldn't hear anything else.

"O, mercy!" whispered Sarah, "I ran my head into a horrid cobweb and it's all in my eyes."

"Sh! *Sh!*" And on they sped lightly.

"Frasie Newcomb, you *shan't* scream, *so there!*" A big mouse, unaccustomed to such interruptions, had flounced across the floor right across the children's feet. *Clang* — CLANG! clingity — *clang!* How queer the old bell sounded up here.

Joe they could see above them as his figure swayed back and forth, and they wondered how he could *possibly* get up there upon the rickety little ladder. Wasn't it delightful though, up in this dim forbidden

spot — all shadowy nooks and mysterious recesses — lighted weirdly by the lurid glare from the firework stand outside. How queer all the people looked moving down on the Green.

“There’s Miss Priscilla Bascom,” announced Tildy with a soft giggle, “Ain’t she funny? My! look at her nose — it’s a yard long!”

“Yes! but O, see what they’re doing there!” whispered Sarah excitedly.

“Where? where?” said Frasier, trying to see.

“O, Frasier! you push bad as the folks on the Green,” grumbled Sarah, not moving in the least to accommodate.

Just then a most dismal noise sounded close which made them all jump and stare in each other’s faces in fright.

“Oh, what was *that*?” whispered Lucia, grasping Thusie’s arm.

Sarah’s black eyes began to protrude a little, but she said nothing.

Hush! Another awful noise that seemed to the frightened girls like thunder; *something* ran and pounced into a dark corner. They didn’t wait to see *what* it was; they sped and tumbled over each other to get to the landing below. Thusie’s lovely blue sash was grasped by Sarah’s sticky fingers, which had

been greedily and slyly diminishing the promised pocketful of candy in the darkness above.

"Well!" gasped Sarah, when at last they reached the foot of the stairs, "I don't see what there is to be frightened at!"

"What — did you — come for then?" choked Thusie, who had scrambled so she could hardly breathe, let alone talk.

"Why, I didn't till you all started," snapped Sarah. "But never mind, here's a splendid place to see!" and she ensconced herself at once in the best corner of the big, square, front window. It was very dirty, being covered with dust and grime, not exactly the place that careful mothers would have selected for the holiday dresses of their children.

The grand show of the evening now began. The girls held their breath as they watched entranced in the dirty old window, crouching together very uncomfortably, trying hard to think they were having a nice time. And O! it was so warm and stifling.

"Phew! How close it is! Do open the window, Sarah!" gasped little Frasia at last.

But it wouldn't open.

"I wish we had staid out on the Green," wailed Tildy.

Suddenly Sarah screamed.

“Why, as sure as you’re alive, they’re going round to the side of the church, girls, with that splendid wheel of liberty! O, *hurry, hurry, hurry!*” and she began to scramble down and pick her way over the rickety landing to the belfry stairs.

“*Wait!*” called out Frasier; but Sarah sped on. They could scarcely see her ahead. They had all they could do to follow her, and Thusie, being last and catching her dress on a rusty nail by the unlucky hole she had acquired in the early part of the day, had to stop outright and release it, and so was entirely separated from the others. Her mates, supposing her close behind, reached the front outer door and were soon scattered in various directions among their friends, and lost in the delightful enjoyments.

Thusie turned, after going down the stairs, the *wrong* way. Near the foot there was a closet, — a little old musty place for odds and ends — a place that very few knew existed. The door of this closet stupid Joe had left open when he went for a pole that was wanted; and Thusie, in her bewilderment stumbling along the narrow passage-way, turned into this door and fell headlong over an old worm-eaten stool standing in the middle of the floor. She struck her forehead with great violence on the floor beyond, and knew no more.

And now the show was over. Everybody was getting ready for home. Old Joe was locking the church.

Couldn't any friendly hand rouse little Thusie? Aunt Fanny, safe at "Brother John's," supposed her with her mother on the Green. This was why Thusie wasn't missed by *anyone*. Couldn't *something* have whispered to the loving mother as she sat there in her low rocking-chair — kept at home herself from Uncle John's by sick little baby Gracie, crooning soft melodies into the fretful little ears — of the danger and loneliness that threatened her little Thusie!

The old church door shut with a bang. This it was, probably, that fairly roused Thusie from the swoon out of which she was slowly coming.

In those first dreadful moments Thusie never knew what she *did*. She groped her way out at last to the main passage. There was a window up to which she managed to climb and press her frightened little face piteously to the pane. From time to time, as she had groped her way along, she had called and shouted and then paused to listen. She soon began to realize this was of no use.

"Oh, dear! I don't believe I ever *could* have hated Uncle John's," she sobbed. "Its just the *loveliest* place!"

And then the bitter tears dropped down and rolled

all over the soiled little cockade that had been so gay and patriotic in the early morning. Thusie was a child of great common sense. She knew nothing could actually *harm* her in the old church, and darkness had never for her any of those keen terrors that invest it with such horrible dread for other children; but remorse reproached her sorely.

She said over all her prayers, even those of her babyhood. And then she watched and waited. It seemed to her hours, but, in reality, it was only late bedtime through the village; the lights, one after another, went out, and all were peacefully settling for the night. . . .

What was *that*! Surely nothing but a mouse nibbling at the old wood-work. Again. *That* was no mousie! Thusie would have said she smelt something burning, only she must have been dreaming. She pinched herself to keep awake. But no! there certainly was a little flame of fire shooting up its determined tongue right there on the very roof of the porch. Locked up in an old church, with the fire that had somehow caught from the fireworks and been smouldering, until now it had broken out! All the people at home and in bed!

Thusie knew enough to realize that the old weather-beaten structure could never withstand the test,

If she could only ring the old bell ! But Joe always put up the ladder and secured it by a hook when he finished ringing. She rattled the window ; she screamed ; she crawled to the door and tried with all her might — which was quite considerable now — to shake it ; *anything* to make a noise.

She could see the fire slowly growing bigger. What was *one* flame had now become *two*, with a swift increasing velocity that threatened the whole building.

“Oh, dear ! I *wanted* fireworks, and now I have got them,” moaned Thusie.

Still the awful crackling as the dry timbers took fire, and the smoke began to come in through the big cracks. She flung herself down on the floor ; she could *not* look up any more.

“*Fire ! fire ! The church is on fire !*” in what seemed to Thusie the voice of an angel, rang through the stillness.

It was Farmer Brown going home late in his wagon. The old church porch was wreathed in flames when his first wild cry rang over the startled village.

Thusie rushed back to the window. She felt the hot rush of the flames pushing in at the cracks and the rickety window. The light of the bright fire fell upon her white dress, whiter face, and disordered hair, making a strange picture ; but she was not dis-

SHE CRAWLED TO THE DOOR AND TRIED WITH ALL HER MIGHT TO SHAKE IT.



covered yet by the excited crowd. At last Job Sawyer, a stalwart rough blacksmith, but with a heart tender as a child's, cried out :

“Why! there's a little *gal* up there!”

All eyes were turned then up to the window, and a second's pause fell upon them all. Then Job sprang upon another man's shoulder, swung himself up to the railing, and with one blow from his powerful fist shattered the window to fragments. He grasped Thusie, passed her to the trembling crowd below. Thusie heard the voices about her as in a dream.

“Why, it's little Thusie Bassett!”

“Sakes alive! how did it happen?”

“What if it had been *my* Jane!”

“Where's her mother?”

She only knew she was in her father's arms — safe *now*! And she knew no more until in her own dear home she came to herself with a great gasp; and there she was, looking into the blessed face of her mother. And six simple little words were on her lips, unuttered, involuntary, but never forgotten, never annulled: “*I will always mind my mother!*”

BOBBY'S SHIRTS.

"MOTHER, *mother!*" called a complaining voice from the top of the stairs ; and pleasant little Mrs. Nash left the rosy bacon and golden eggs she was frying, and going to the stairway door, answered :

"What is wanted, Bobby?"

"A *s-h-i-r-t!*"

"You don't mean to say, Robert Nash, that your shirt is missing again?" And Mrs. Nash, in her excitement, threw up her hands, and the fork she had been using dropped and the tines stuck up in the floor.

Charlotte left the steaming, mealy potatoes she was peeling and ran to the stairway door. Harriet came also with the loaf of bread in her hands. Sarah joined the group with a dish of pickles ; while

Mary, appearing on the scene with a plate of cheese, was confronted by Martha with a plate of butter, and Emeline with a pumpkin pie.

"What's up?" cried Captain Nash, entering the kitchen with a pail in each hand. "Where are the wimmin folks? The house is full of smoke. The cat's on the breakfast table with her head in the milk pitcher, — *s-c-cat!* you cat. The dog is at the cheese-curd, — git out, Lion! git out, sir! A hen and chicken in the bread-tray, — sho, sho, *sho!*"

The six girls scattered as their father came up saying:

"Ain't that boy up yit? There's no tellin' what mischief the cows will git into. I turned 'em out more'n an hour ago. Come, come, boy! git up."

"I would have been up," whined Bobby from the room above, "but I hadn't any shirt to put on."

The captain's bearded chin dropped as these words came floating down the little dark back stairway.

"He shall stay in bed with nothin' ter eat till he owns up about them shirts! He's plannin' ter run away to sea or somewhere, an' he means ter have shirts 'nough ter last him a three years v'y'ge; but I'll starve it out on him!"

"He will have to lie in bed anyway," sighed Mrs.

Nash, "for he has nothing in the world to put on, and there must be a shirt made for him, and company coming, too," and she pulled the tines out of the clean white floor.

"I should think there might be sumthin' mustered up for that boy to put on for a shirt," said the captain.

"His shirts are all gone again, father," said Charlotte, the eldest, "and there's no use scolding or whipping him, for that don't bring them back."

"Gone!" put in Harriet, "I should think so. Old ones and new ones, flannel ones and cotton ones, fine ones and coarse ones; and all father's old ones, as well as my two white sacques and Sarah's short night gowns, and every other garment that belonged to any one of us that could be made to do duty as a shirt."

"I believe," said the more practical sister Martha, "that he sells them for peanuts or candy, or something of that sort."

"Nonsense," bridled up Emeline. "Bobby is no such kind of a boy; he is just doing it for fun, and of course the missing garments must be in the house somewhere. I intend to take another good look, and *find* them this time, if I have to overhaul the back-chamber and garret," and away she ran up-stairs and into her brother's room.

"Now, bub," said the good-natured sister pleasantly, "if you will tell me where you have hid all those shirts, I will bring you up a nice breakfast unbeknown to any of the folks."

"I dunno," whimpered poor Bobby. "I hope to die if I do."

"I don't believe he does know," thought Emeline. "Bobby is a conscientious boy and he never would have said 'hope to die' if he had hid them shirts or sold them for peanuts and candy." So she drew from beneath her apron an egg and ham sandwich done up in a paper, and handing it to Bobby left the room without a word.

The hungry boy barely had time to make way with the welcome offering when he again heard steps upon the stairs. He curled his bare arms and shoulders under the bed-clothes and peered out disconsolately. It was Charlotte this time.

"Now if you will tell me without any teasing, bub, where all your shirts are, I will bring you up a lunch."

"I dunno, no more'n the dead, sissy," and Bobby began to cry as he added emphasis to pathos. "I hope to die and choke to death if I do."

"Dear me, how you do talk," said Charlotte, and hearing the stair-way door open she slid a handful of cookies and a slice of gingerbread under her broth-

er's pillow, and slipped out into the shed chamber just as Sarah appeared in the little room.

"Now, Bobby," she began —

"Don't you ask me another word about them plaguey old shirts," shouted the now thoroughly irate lad. "I hope to die and choke to death, and never breathe another breath, if I know what has become of them ; and I should think I had said so times enough. And if you want to see me starve to death right before your eyes, all right ; but I don't think *I* should allow one of *my* sisters to be treated in this way."

This appeal was so pathetic that the sedate Sarah brought forth from the folds of her dress a mince turnover and a generous cube of sage cheese.

"Good for you !" cried Bobby, seizing with alacrity his favorite viands ; while Sarah meeting Mary in the hall told her that she began to believe with old mother Whipple that Bobby was bewitched.

The girls, each in turn, had carried up a dainty lunch to their only and much petted brother, now in durance vile ; but for all that the forenoon dragged for the always active boy, and he sat up in bed and listened eagerly as, about noon, there floated up to him from the front of the house the little bustle of an arrival. Presently, one of the girls put her head in the door of his room to say that it was Aunt Louisa



HE SAT UP IN BED AND LISTENED EAGERLY.

and the twins, Jared and Jason, and that they came in the Westford stage.

"Where is Bobby?" demanded the two somewhat uproarious boys. Their cheery voices rang through the capacious and substantial farmhouse, even to the little ell-room and bed wherein was curled the culprit, just now in a fearful state of impatience, while below, his mother and sisters were explaining the condition of affairs to the visitors.

"I suppose the twins can go up and see him," said Mrs. Nash, "but he can't get up just yet. Sarah has been to the store with some eggs and bought some cotton cloth, and Emeline has cut out a shirt, and the girls have all lent a hand as each had a spare moment, but it is not ready to put on."

"My boys have got shirts enough," said considerate Aunt Louisa, unlocking her big trunk; and soon Jared and Jason were mounting the stairs, two steps at a time, shouting each jump as only wide awake boys can.

"The poor boy will be glad to get up to dinner," said his mother. "He must be hungry enough by this time."

"Haven't you had anything to eat to-day?" asked Jared, eyeing Bobby curiously as he emerged from the bed and drew the neat little snow-white shirt over

his head. Bobby laughed, put his finger on his lips, then raised one of the fluffy white pillows, disclosing under it, between the folds of a newspaper, the remains of his lunch.

"They've all brought me a bite except mother, and she would have been glad to only she wouldn't dare to disobey father. I 'spose she's dreadfully worried for fear I am hungry."

Here the dinner-bell rang. The advent of the aunt and cousins operated towards the enlargement of the prisoner, of course; and it only needed the gracious assent of Captain Nash to cause the appearance of his little son at the table. Bobby partook so very sparingly that his mother thought he must be ill; but his antics with his cousins reassured the tender-hearted little woman, as they left the good farmer's generous table and ran capering off to the big barns.

"Now, cousin Bobby," said Jared, "tell us about your shirts. Are you really saving them up to take with you when you run away; and where are you going? Tell *us*, won't you?"

"I ain't a-going to run away," cried Bobby in a fretful tone, provoked as he could be that the dreaded subject must be thrust upon him even by his visitors. "I hain't no idea of runnin' away and I never had;

and I hope to die and be shot and scalped and skinned and drowned and have hot lead poured in my ears, if I know where them old duds *are*. And now I hope y will believe what I say and not talk



SARAH, MEETING MARY IN THE HALL.

no more about them *shirts!*” And Bobby turned a neat somerset on the hay-mow, and astonished the twins by jumping off upon the clover bay below.

“Is there any good place to go in swimming around

here?" queried the cousins, when Bobby appeared at the top of the long ladder, which was made by pins inserted in the post.

"Oh, heaps of them ; but our folks are so afraid I shall go near them that they make themselves miserable all the time. I don't s'pose you'll believe me when I tell you that I've never been in swimming in my life. O, don't I wish I could once! I would dive and swim like *this*." And, putting the palms of his hands together above his head, with an Indian whoop he plunged again down from the great beams upon the fresh, loose clover, where he kicked and squirmed and went through all the motions of swimming.

"Come on, boys, and see how cool and fresh the water feels. I'm the great American champion swimmer and diver and floater! I can float, strike out, dog-paddle, and swim under water! Come on, I say."

"There he is again," said Emeline to her Aunt Louisa. They had entered the broad, cleanly swept barn floor just in time to witness this last performance. "He is bewitched, too, on the subject of swimming. He reads everything he can find about swimmers and divers, and is perfectly wild about the water. If he was not such a remarkably obedient boy

we should be in a constant terror lest he should be drowned. But father has positively forbidden his going into the water, and Bobby would never think of breaking one of father's rules."

"I tell you, Aunt Louisa, a boy with six sisters, all older than he is, is an object of pity anyway," said Bobby, landing in a flying leap from some unexpected quarter and turning another of his remarkable somersets on the barn floor, to the delight of the twins and the consternation of his sister.

"If I start off fishin'," went on Bobby, "I'm ordered not to go near the water ; if I want to go hunting they hide father's gun and ammunition ; if I jump they cry out I shall be lamed ; if I want to take a ride they implore father to keep the horse in the barn. I might as well be a wax doll and done with it for all the fun I'm allowed to have. I can't really *do* anything — I have to make believe ! So come on and see my cannon," and with a shout the three boys disappeared in the orchard.

The cannon proved to be a huge log, from which the bark had been peeled long before so that it was bleached to a snowy whiteness. Half of its length was hollow. Bobby drew a long walnut pole from its hiding-place beneath the log.

"This is the great revolving Gattling gun," said he,

"See me load her now. This is my ram-rod," and he went through his manual of artillery loading and firing, the twins lustily shouting "*bang*" when he pulled the cord he had affixed to the make-believe hammer, and thinking it fine fun.

"This old log might be loaded and split with real powder," said Bobby. "It would make a tremendous noise, but, oh, dear me! the girls would have a fit at the bare mention of it. I tell you what it is, boys, it's pretty hard on a feller to have to be used as well as I am. The fact is, I am just killed with kindness. I know it's nice to have sisters to fix you up and curl your hair and help you get your lessons and to take you visiting and tell just how to be nice and sweet and pretty, but a boy must have some boy's *fun*."

When night came, the three lads teased so hard to be allowed to share the same room that Mrs. Nash made up Bobby's bed as nice as she could, with two extra blankets and pillows, and, at an early hour, tired out with their afternoon's frolic, they went to bed.

About midnight, Bobby astonished his cousins by getting out of bed and opening one of the chamber windows.

"What's up?" drowsily asked Jason, rousing up and turning over with a groan.

"Hush!" whispered Jared, getting out of bed in his turn. "Don't you see he's asleep? Look at his



LET'S SEE WHAT HE WILL DO.

staring eyes. Let's see what he will do."

The moon was at its full and was shining directly into the room, so that the boys could see almost as well as in broad daylight. Bobby deliberately got out of the open window upon the flat roof of the ell, crossed it, swung himself into the limbs of an apple-tree in near proximity, and from them descended to the ground.

"What one boy has done another boy may do, al-

though the first boy is asleep and insensible to danger," whispered Jared, as, followed closely by Jason, he slipped quickly to the ground. "Come on!" And away the three white-robed figures sped in the sultry night.

Well, Bobby gave his pursuers quite a race. Through the garden, the orchard, and a strip of meadow, along beside an old stone fence, in the shadow of a wood, until he came upon that very same log, the "Revolving Gattling gun" of the afternoon.

Bobby paused beside the old bleached log lying so still and glistening in the bright moonlight, stripped his borrowed shirt off over his head, rolled it carefully into a wad, then, putting it into the opening of the hollow part of the log, he pounded it snugly home with the long walnut 'ram-rod', which he very cautiously replaced under the fringe of high grass beneath the log. He then went through all the motions of firing the 'gun', after which he climbed upon the top of the log, and walking to the highest end, placing his hands above his curly head, palms together, he leaped off down into the heavy, dewy grass, and went sprawling about after the fashion of the afternoon performance, — "swimming under water," the poor boy ploughed his head along in the grass; and swimming "dog-paddle," he turned upon his

side and kicked and pulled himself on in the direction of the farm-house. His strength, doubtless, now almost exhausted, he rose and retraced his steps to the garden. Regaining the roof by the same means as he descended from it, he quickly ran across it, scrambled into the window and immediately curled down between the sheets, the twins close upon his heels at all points.

Jared and Jason had arranged their plans for the morrow as they were following Bobby through the meadow ; and soon the trio were fast asleep.

The twins were awakened in the early morning by Bobby cheerily shouting :

“ Hello, boys, *your* shirt's gone slick and clean ! ”

His look of utter bewilderment was so funny to see that the twins could not help laughing immoderately. The folks below, who were also astir early that morning, came trooping up to the boys' room in answer to Jared's lusty calls. Bobby's mother looked grave, Martha and Sarah cried ; but Aunt Louisa presently brought another shirt, and then the three boys were soon in hot pursuit of the cows that had broken into an adjacent corn-field.

Breakfast over, there was a great deal of confidential talk between the twins and their mother on the front piazza, followed by her going out to the barns

where her brother was still at his chores and begging him to allow the boys to split open that big log with "real powder."

"I've been thinkin' of havin' it done for some time," said the farmer. "There's a cord o' wood in that log at the least calculation. But I haven't the time to see to it myself, and I don't want to trust the boys at the business; but if they can get Dennis Gould to help them and see that they ain't careless with the powder, I don't care."

So the boys ran off to the village and soon returned with Dennis, with a whole wheelbarrow load of augurs, beetles, wedges, axes, screws, and a quantity of blasting powder and fuse. It was nearly dinner-time before the charges were loaded ready to fire off.

The family were invited to come down and stand on the sand knoll under the big hemlock, at a safe distance from the log, and see it "touched off." The pieces of fuse were lighted, and then the boys and Dennis ran as fast as they could and joined the little group on the knoll. The fire flashed and smoked and sputtered, but made steady progress. When the fire reached the charges, there was a pause for a few seconds; then there was a grand explosion, the huge log rising up in the air, whipping over, and falling back clove straight through in two piec-

es. How they all scampered down to them — the girls as well as the boys! And how they all wondered and exclaimed when they saw Bobby's multitudinous shirts lying about in little mildewed wads!

Bobby was as much surprised as anyone, you may be sure, and listened with open mouth and staring eyes when Jared and Jason related the story of his midnight exploit.

"Now, girls," said Aunt Louisa, "I hope this will be a lesson to you, and teach you that a boy will never grow up to be a strong, healthy, fearless, useful, *manly* man unless he is allowed to indulge moderately in innocent boyish sports."

Well, the girls did realize that their pet brother had, all this time, been in much greater danger from his sleep-walking than he would have been had he been suffered to learn to swim and indulge in other recreations with his mates in the day time.

And, truly, never again was Bobby known to walk and "carry on" in his sleep, after he was allowed to have some "real fun" instead of "make-believe."

AN UNINVITED GUEST.

WHEN Col. Frank Johnson and his two sons settled on the banks of Pleasant Creek and commenced sawing lumber with the newly invented gang-saw, it was a perfect wilderness. Their hut of logs was erected on a slight hill overlooking the stream on which their rough mill was situated, and these two structures were fully ten miles from any habitation. One who looks to-day upon the pretty little town of Johnsonville can hardly realize that its origin was of so recent a date.

Great trees wooded the banks of the creek, through which a path had been cut from the house to the mill, the track of which to-day bears the name, "*Tom's Avenue*," so called by the old man in admiration of his son Thomas, who was the hero of the story I am now telling.

The mill was in constant operation, night and day, with one or the other of the three, and sometimes two of them, to watch the process of sawing; all of them being required when the sawing of one log was completed to put in another. When two had the watch by night, one would lie down under blankets brought from the house, to be called when wanted by the other. In summer it was a luxury to break off the spruce boughs and make a bed of them, and the boys, who were sixteen and eighteen years old, enjoyed this wild life very much.

Their mother being dead, they had to do their own cooking and mending, and were very handy house-keepers. They were handy also with the gun and fishing rod, and the woods were full of deer and other game, and the creek with fish. They lived like princes on what they procured in this way. It was fun for them to range the woods and fish in the stream, and they would take turns to watch the saw while one went hunting, or, at times, they would both go together, leaving their father at the mill.

One day they went further into the forest than usual in search of game, when they were startled by the breaking of branches, and a huge bear came out of a little opening and stood on his hind legs before them, looking very inquiringly as to what their errand was.

They did not stop to tell him, but scampered off as fast as possible, without letting the grass grow under their feet. When they found that the bear was not following them, Dick, the older, expressed himself very sorry that he had not fired at the brute, but Tom thought they had done better to retreat; saying, that while bear venison was very good upon a table, it didn't seem so attractive to him in its raw condition. This was the first bear they had seen, but their father told them there was a *bare* possibility of their seeing more sometime.

They were rather on the lookout for bears after this fearing lest some trouble might be *bruin*; but they kept away, and soon the boys thought nothing about them. And they went on pretty much as they had done, sawing out lots of lumber, which purchasers from below made rafts of and run down the creek to its junction with the great river. The saw employed was, as I have said, the new gang-saw, which made a whole log into boards at one time. When the saw was running, some portion of the machinery was applied to drawing the log through as fast as it was sawed.

One night the saw had commenced busily running through a large log, with Tom on the watch. Dick had lain down under his blankets, and their father

was at the house awaiting a summons to help "jerk a new log." It was very still outside, and the ruddy light from pitch faggots, that burned on a great stone, shone through the open sides of the mill and lighted up the forest all around. It was a weary watch for Tom, though he had become accustomed to it, and he beat his feet upon the floor and warmed himself at the fire when he felt cold until eleven o'clock had arrived, as he judged by the stars. Dick was to be awakened at midnight, and his father was to be called soon after, so to keep up his spirits he took the lunch he had brought to the mill, which was placed in a side nook, and, seating himself on the log which was slowly being sawed, he spread his repast out and began to eat it.

He had scarcely made way with one mouthful, when he heard a sound which caused him to suspend the second one, and wait with open mouth, eyes and ears, to have the sound repeated. He could not make out the nature of it or where it came from. It seemed a sort of growl or snort, and amidst the noise the saw was making, it was not possible to determine its character. It might have been Dick snoring as he lay hidden by the blankets, so he stopped eating and listened. Very soon the sound was repeated, nearer and louder than before, and this time leaving Tom in

no doubt regarding it. He looked in the direction from whence the noise came, and there, showing plainly in the light which flashed out upon him, was a huge black bear, his eyes glowing, and showing an evident intention of coming in without an invitation.

Tom did not long hesitate what to do. His descent from the log was a remarkably speedy movement, and forgetting his brother Dick, who lay in blessed unconsciousness, he darted for the opening the opposite of that by which the bear was entering, expecting a vigorous race. A few moments after, as he ran, he thought of Dick, and without considering his own weakness in the event of an encounter with the enemy, he turned back. The bear had either not commenced the pursuit, or had given it up, and Tom feared that he might have found poor Dick and be even then making a meal of him. Returning toward the mill, and keeping behind the trees as he went, he at last got to a place where he could see the whole interior and there, to his astonishment, was the bear seated on the log making free with his supper, while Dick lay still snoozing undisturbed.

The bear rather prolonged his meal, as if he relished it, while the log was travelling toward the saw. The animal's face was turned from it, and, as he finished the last crumb, he swayed his body from side to side



IN HAPPY UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

with a show of satisfaction, and arose upon his hind legs as if he were about to dance. At that moment the saw struck him from behind, whereupon he turned with a howl of pain which brought Dick to his feet, and, throwing his arms about the traversing saw, in a moment he was dead, his blood smearing the log on which he lay.

Tom rushed in just as Dick rushed out. They met furiously in the doorway, each throwing the other down, and each cried out "Help!" as loud as he could. Their father heard the sound at the house, and in a moment they heard his feet in the lane. He reached them almost as soon as they had recovered their feet.

"Well, boys, what's the matter?" said he.

"Matter!" cried Tom, "just look in there! I've sawed a big brute of a bear all up into venison *stakes!*"

Mr. Johnson and his boys hurried in—and there was the monster most happily cut up for use; and the old man complimented his boy on the neatness of his execution, which would bear admiring scrutiny as a work of art; indeed, a better he never saw.

Such is the story that was told to me while sojourning in the village of Johnsonville, and Esquire Johnson, now president of the bank, and last year repre-

sentative of the General Court, was pointed out to me as the identical Tom who served up the bear. Dick was running a woolen mill up in New Hampshire, a prosperous and worthy citizen.

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR. The foregoing sketch may be relied on, because I have seen the ruins of the old mill where the main transaction is supposed to have occurred; similar in logic to Mark Twain's testimony regarding the residence of Mary of Magdala—he knew the Scriptural account of it was true, because the house was right there before his eyes. I am informed by the Editor of *THE WIDE AWAKE* that an account of a similar circumstance among the “first settlers” was published long ago. I never saw it, but if it was, it but corroborates the possibility of this of mine, with this difference—that, happening at so very early a day, was before gang-saws were known, and therefore the bear was simply sawn in two; whereas, in my story the superior genius is shown in sawing the bear into venison “stakes” by means of the newer invention.

CAPT. JAMES B. EADS.

LAST December, on the steamship "Germanic," I played chess with the great civil engineer, Captain Eads, stimulated by the thought that to beat him was to defeat the man who had twice conquered the Mississippi. But I didn't defeat him.

The building of a ship-canal across the Isthmus of Suez, made famous the Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps. So the opening up of the mouth of the Mississippi river has distinguished Captain Eads. To-day both these men are struggling for the rare honor of joining at the Isthmus of Panama, the waters of the great Atlantic and Pacific; a magnificent scheme, which if successful, will save annually thousands of miles of dangerous sea voyage around Cape Horn, besides millions of money.

The "Great West" seems to delight in producing

self-made men like Lincoln, Grant, Eads and others.

James B. Eads was born in Indiana in 1820. He is slender in form, neat in dress, genial, courteous, and nearly sixty years of age. In 1833 his father started down the Ohio river with his family, proposing to settle in Wisconsin. The boat caught fire and his scanty furniture and clothing were burned. Young Eads barely escaped ashore with his pantaloons, shirt and cap. Taking passage on another boat, this boy of thirteen landed at St. Louis with his parents, his little bare feet first touching the rocky shore of the city on the very spot where he afterwards located and built the largest steel bridge in the world, over the Mississippi — one of the most difficult feats of engineering ever performed in America.

At the age of nine, young Eads made a short trip on the Ohio, when the engineer of the steamboat explained to him so clearly the construction of the steam engine that before he was a year older he built a little working model of it, so perfect in its parts and movements, that his schoolmates would frequently go home with him after school to see it work. A locomotive engine, driven by a concealed rat, was one of his next juvenile feats in mechanical

engineering. From eight to thirteen he attended school ; after which from necessity he was placed as clerk in a dry goods store.

How few young people of the many to whom poverty denies an education, either understand the value of the saying, "knowledge is power," or exercise will sufficient to overcome obstacles. Will-power and thirst for knowledge elevated General Garfield from driving canal horses to the Senate of the United States.

Over the store in St. Louis, where he was engaged, his employer lived. He was an old bachelor, and having observed the tastes of his clerk, gave him his first book on engineering. The old gentleman's library furnished evening companions for him during the five years he was thus employed. Finally, his health failing, at the age of nineteen, he went on a Mississippi river steamer ; from which time to the present day, that great river has been to him an all-absorbing study.

Soon afterwards he formed a partnership with a friend and built a small boat to raise cargoes of vessels sunken in the Mississippi. While this boat was building, he made his first venture in submarine engineering, on the lower rapids of the river, by the recovery of several hundred tons of lead. He hired

a scow or flat-boat and anchored it over the wreck. An experienced diver, clad in armor, who had been hired at considerable expense in Buffalo, was lowered into the water ; but the rapids were so swift that the diver, though encased in the strong armor, feared to be sunk to the bottom. Young Eads, determined to succeed, and finding it impracticable to use the armor, went ashore, purchased a whiskey barrel, knocked out the head, attached the air-pump hose to it, fastened several heavy weights to the open end of the barrel — then swinging it on a derrick he had a practical diving bell ; the best use I ever heard made of a whiskey barrel.

Neither the diver, nor any of the crew, would go down in this contrivance, so the dauntless young engineer, having full confidence in what he had read in books, was lowered within the barrel down to the bottom ; the lower end of the barrel being open. The water was sixteen feet deep, and very swift. Finding the wreck he remained by it a full hour, hitching ropes to pig lead till a ton or more was safely hoisted into his own boat. Then making a signal by a small line attached to the barrel, he was lifted on deck and in command again. The sunken cargo was soon successfully raised and was sold, and netted a handsome profit which, increased by other

successes, enabled energetic Eads to build larger boats with powerful pumps and machinery on them for lifting entire vessels. He surprised all his friends in floating even immense sunken steamers — boats which had long been given up as lost.

When the Rebellion came, it was soon evident that a strong fleet must be put upon Western rivers to assist our armies. Word came from the Government to Captain Eads to report in Washington. His thorough knowledge of the “Father of Waters” and its tributaries, and his practical suggestions, secured an order to build seven gunboats, and soon after an order for the eighth was given.

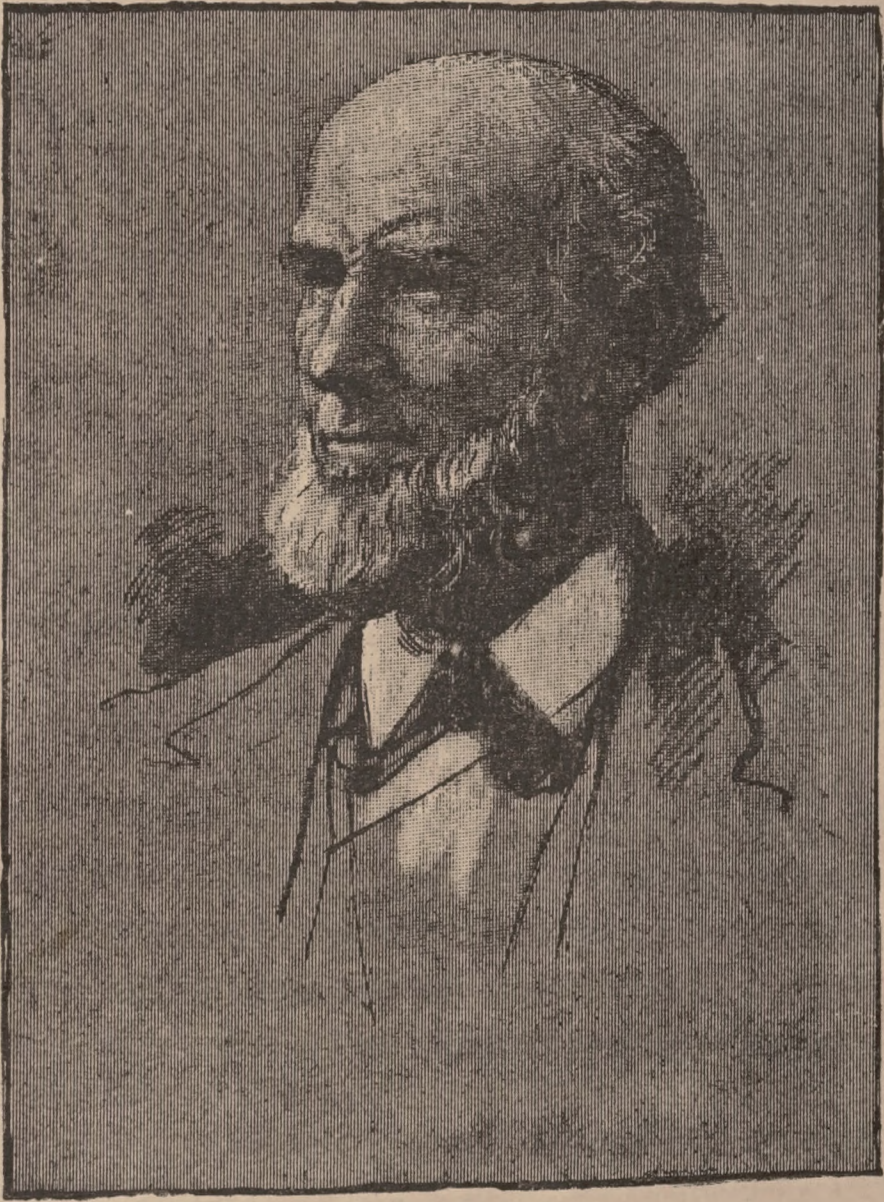
In forty-eight hours after receiving this authority, his agents and assistants were at work, and suitable ship timber was felled in half a dozen Western states for their hulls. Contracts were awarded to large engine and iron works in St. Louis, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati; and within one hundred days, eight powerful iron-clad gun-boats, carrying over one hundred large cannon and costing a million dollars, were achieving victories no less important for the Mississippi valley than those which Ericsson’s famous “Cheese-box Monitor” afterwards won on the James river.

These eight gun boats, Commodore Foote ably

employed in his brave attacks on Forts McHenry and Donaldson. They were the first iron-clads the United States ever owned. Captain Eads covered the boats with iron. Commodore Foote covered them with glory.

Eads built not less than fourteen of these gun-boats. During the war, the models were exhibited by request to the German and other Governments. His next work was to throw across the mighty Mississippi River, nearly half a mile wide, at St. Louis, a monstrous steel bridge, supported by three arches, the spans of two being 502 feet long and the central one 520 feet. The huge piles were ingeniously sunk in the treacherous sand, one hundred and thirty-six feet below the flood level to the solid rock, through ninety feet of sand. This bridge and its approaches cost eighty millions of dollars and is used by ten or twelve railroad companies. Above the tracks is a big street with carriage roads, street cars and walks for foot passengers.

The honor of building the finest bridge in the world would have satisfied most men, but not ambitious Captain Eads. He actually loved the noble river in which De Soto its discoverer was buried, and fully realized the vast, undeveloped resources of its rich valleys. Equally well he understood what a



CAPT. JAMES B. EADS.

gigantic work in the past the river and its 1500 sizable tributaries had accomplished in times of freshets, by depositing soil and sand north of the original Gulf of Mexico, forming an alluvial plain 500 miles long, 60 miles wide and of unknown depth, and having a delta extending out into the Gulf, 60 miles long and as many miles wide and probably a mile deep. And yet this heroic man, although jealously opposed for years by West Point engineers, having a sublime confidence in the laws of nature, and actuated by intense desire to benefit mankind, dared to stand on the immense sand-bars at the mouth of this defiant stream and, making use of the jetty system, bid the river itself dig a wide, deep channel into the seas beyond, for the world's commerce.

Captain Eads, who had studied the improvements on the Danube, Maas and other European rivers, observed that all rivers flow faster in their narrow channels and carry along in the swift water, sand, gravel and even stones. This familiar law he applied at the South Pass of the Mississippi River, where the waters, though deep above, escaped from the banks into the gulf, and spread sediment far and wide.

The water on the sand-bars of the three principal passes varied from eight to thirteen feet in depth.

Many vessels require twice the depth. Two piers, 1200 feet apart, were built from lands' end a mile into the sea. They were made from willows, timber, gravel, concrete and stone. Mattresses, 100 feet long, from 25 to 50 feet wide, and two feet thick were constructed from small willows placed at right angles and bound securely together. These were floated into position and sunk with gravel, one mattress upon another, which the river soon filled with sand that firmly held them in their place. The top was finished with heavy concrete blocks, to resist the waves. These piers are called jetties and the swift collected waters have already carried over five million cubic yards of sand into the deep gulf, and made a ship-way over thirty feet deep. The \$5,000,000 paid by the United States was little enough for so priceless a service.

